

DRAWING THE IRON CURTAIN

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ESCAPE

NUMBER 14

AMERICAN FLAGG IN MOSCOW

HOWARD CHAYKIN RED²

ARTZYBASHEFF

HE HATES IN PAINT

REVELATIONS

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ALAN MOORE

BILL SIENKIEWICZ

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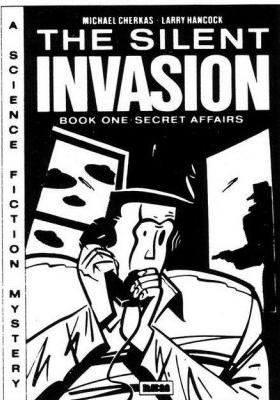
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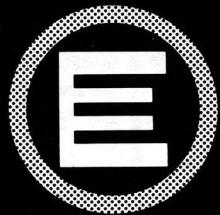
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66 HIP PARADE

WIN A BEANO OF DANDY T-SHIRTS!!

THERE WAS INSTANT DETENTE AT THE CARTOON SUMMIT IN SAN FRANCISCO thanks to a glasnost-style Exchange exhibit of Soviet and local American cartoonists and a videophone connection to the Pravda Cartoon Club in Moscow. Humour may be universal, but the Exchange highlighted differences between the two super powers' funny bones. Americans laugh at comic strip narratives in a mix of personal styles, from Peanuts to Fritz the Cat, whereas Russians prefer more general satire in traditional captionless graphics, like Valentin Rozantsev's panel above. For some reason comics have never caught on in the USSR. This is despite the early success of the Revolutionary ROSTA WINDOWS, agitational art that filled the Russian Telegraph Agency's windows with cartoons and captions, so that the whole front of the building became one huge magnified comic strip (see page 36). Sensitive to the power of cartoon art, the government in 1983 sentenced satirist Viatcheslav Syssoev to two years in prison on charges of 'pornography' and recently closed down his one-man show in Moscow. What will be the official response to America's wild men of comics, like R. Crumb and S. Clay Wilson, when this Exchange tours next year to six major Russian cities?

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM: MARC BAINES • LES COLEMAN • JOHN FREEMAN • DAVE GIBBONS • BOB LYNCH • SAVAGE PENCIL • TREV'S PHOENIX • ED PINSENT • HARLEY RICHARDSON • JONATHAN SELZER • PETER STANBURY • DAVE THORPE • JIM WOODRING

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ARTICLES

EDITED BY LOUISE TUCKER

1 Don't say it, spray it! Throwing fluoro-carbons to the wind, The FAB FOUR, alias Danny Jenkins and Andy O'Neill, customise leather gear and spray-paint through stencils. They've re-decorated nightclubs, including a one-night expo at London's Limelight Club. Andy's speciality is monster stencils. 'We're working much bigger now and spraying onto this plastic material, the stuff balloons are made of, using it as a brightly coloured canvas.' Danny also daubs his hyperactive graphix onto leather baseball caps and jacket patches, on sale in American Classics in the King's Road (01 352 2853). He's just discovered a brilliant new range of spraycan colours. They're supposed to be used for spraying live flowers - can you believe it?

2 Trust the canny French to get the most from their post. While we make do with dreary history or blurry sports scenes, their Post Office rounds up a dozen top comics artists to design a set of postage stamps. To be franked, four of the best by Moebius, Tardi, Bretecher and Bifa!

3 Sorry Mister, there is no 13th floor! The punchline delivered by the elevator man in an old Steve Ditko mystery comic stuck in the mire of Roky Erikson's mind, drifting up through his subconscious when he needed a name for his band. Thus *The Thirteenth Floor Elevators*, purveyors of some of the best fuzz psychadelia of the Sixties. Their twin trademarks of Tommy Hall's warbling electric jug and Roky's menacing growl of a voice sprawl over 'Fire Engine', 'You're Gonna Miss Me' and 'Reverberation', songs that'll become classics of the genre.

The label Five Hours Back, who have recently disinterred Elevators' five tapes and out-takes, have just issued *Two-Toried Tales* (cat.no TICK 001, available from Zippo Records, 37-39 Clapham Park Road, London SW4), a seven-inch including two short monologues by Roky, in his role as EC Crypt Keeper. A repayment of his debt to the mystery comics.

His fables are doubly twisted because their 'surprise' endings are either obvious right from the start or so completely ludicrous that they darken rather than illuminate the story. The latter concerns a deal between a fugitive and a surgeon, the former, punctuated by Roky's psychotic guffaws, is a ghoulish tale about a community of Ed Gein-type characters embarking on a picnic. All this skronk is etched onto a luminous vinyl fashioned from curled





blood and packaged by the intimitable Savage Pencil in a neat EC pastiche. Buy if you dare! - MB

4 As the hands of time move inexorably towards midnight and armageddon, there cannot be a more appropriate accessory to Moore & Gibbons' intricate *Watchmen* epic than your very own nuclear ticker. With its smily face, symbol from the sunny Sixties updated with a spatter of blood for the ironic Eighties, it costs £25 or \$39.95 import.

5 Forget Bush and The Duke – the people's choice is Desperate Dan! After all, if a faded star – with or without astrology – can make it to The White House, surely a Cactusville copkake can do it too? One of twenty *beano* *Dandy* T-shirts from Mobile Merchandising, with Gnasher's Seal of Approval, on sale gnatationally at around £9.95.

6 It's back from the grave! George Romero and John Russo's *Night of the Living Dead*, the seminal gore movie that wouldn't die, is resurrected after twenty years in two different bubblegum card sets. Fantagraphics' authorized edition has sharper photos and more cards including behind-the-scenes shots, but Rosem's fifty card pirate series scores with its punchy titles and complete fevered story on the flip sides. Zombie boys and ghouls, take your pick!

7 COFFEE TABLE BOOK OF THE MONTH is for hamburger addicts with a taste for robotic body-parts, hooded cultists, crooked cryogenics and sperm bank scots. The wrestling private eye's weirdest cases in *Hard-Boiled Detective Stories* by Charles Burns from Raw-Pantheon, \$10.95-\$8.95 import.

ON TOUR: Don't miss *The Black Island: Britain in Bandes Dessinées* exhibition, coming to a town near you. Catch it until June 26th at Glasgow's Mitchell Library before it travels to Newcastle University Library from July 5th to 17th and then to Heffers Bookshop, Cambridge from July 18th to August 25th.

ON SWITCH: The BBC's Birthday bash for Superman's Fiftieth kicks off with a Radio 4 documentary and a lacklustre American 'special', plus re-runs of the classic radio serials and BBC2's excellent *Arena* programme, fanfare'd by a Dave Gibbons' cover and strip for *Radio Times*.

ON ALERT: Two years after the Russian reactor 'accident' that shook the world, *The Chernobyl Effect* by Dave Thorpe reveals the truth: it was that mad genius Doc Chaos' wedding night. His 'autobiography' published by Hooligan Press, features art by Duncan Fegredo, Brett Ewins, Dave McKean, Ed Piskin and more. There's a signing at Forbidden Planet on July 30th and all profits go to WISE, the World Information Service on Energy.

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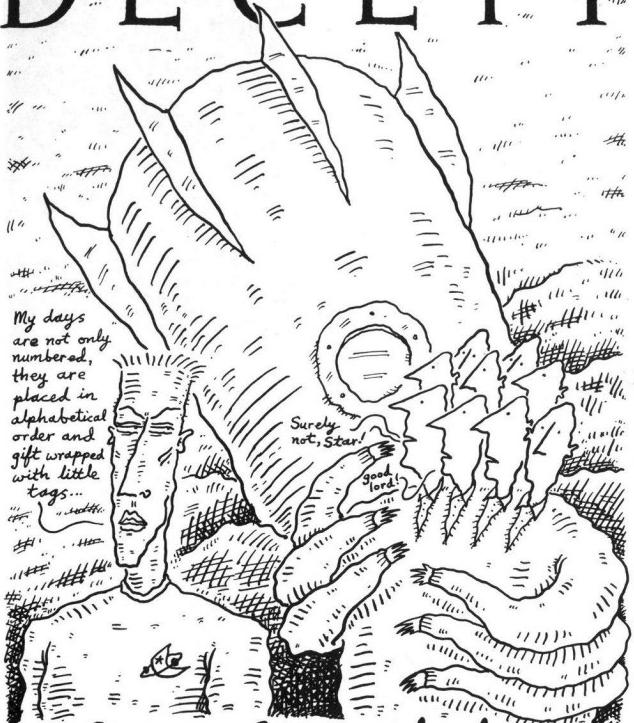
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DECEIT



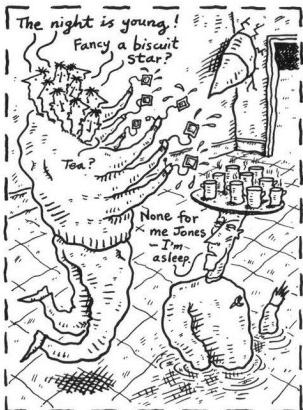
a Captain Star melodrama!

Jim Star, Captain of the Boiling Hell, roundest ship of its class ever built, waits in vain for orders from Mission Control.

Tonight Star sleeps uneasily - forgotten noises and dark planets infect his dreams...



The Captain dreams that 'Limbs' Jones - wearing nine wigs made from intelligent orange fun-fur - is making himself at home in the kitchen.



The next morning nine empty glasses and the remains of nine take-aways in the lounge do nothing to ease the Captain's troubled mind.



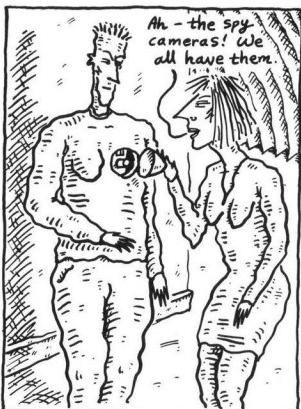
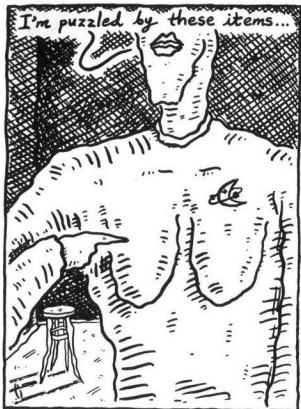


Standing outside Contradictory Colin's General Store, Atomic engine stoker 'Limbs' Jones makes no mention of his late night intrusion into Captain Star's sleep...



The world slowly turns and Officer Scarlette - doctor and munitions expert aboard the Boiling Hell - gives Captain Star a few answers and a medical...







R R R R R E D²

Interview by Paul Gravett

Howard Chaykin's twisted sense of humour crackles through the satirical farce of *American Flagg!*, which he has just exiled to a consumerised Soviet Union; Moscow gripped by an absurdist glittering neon-lit future.

He grew up in New York during the Cold War, but now lives in the perpetual summer amid the jacuzzis and Valley Girls of Glendale, California.

Howard Chaykin – Cowboy or Cossack? 'I don't mind, just so long as I can wear the boots.'

I'M CONVINCED THERE'S COSSACK BLOOD IN ME, because I'm a nice Jewish boy with high cossack cheekbones. My family on both sides were raped by cossacks. On my mother's side my grandmother was Austrian of Russian and Polish ancestry, my grandfather was Polish, and on my father's side both were horse-traders from Odessa. Both sides were of anarchist socialist leanings, 'street-thinkers' is what they were called into the Twenties.

By the time I was growing up in the Fifties in New York, that socialism had deteriorated into an FDR socialism and ultimately the family became a bunch of bleeding heart liberals, which is what they are today. My father was a vet, my mom was a second-rate band singer in third-rate bands. Basically we thought Republicans were on a par with the Anti-Christ, and most Democrats were acceptable as long as they didn't espouse any religious beliefs. We forgave Jews for their religious beliefs in politics, but the concept of a Jewish Republican was patently absurd.

You grew up during the Cold War years. How was Russia perceived then in America?

For my family and me there was the problem of the dichotomy of the Soviet Union on the one hand as the supreme apotheosis of Leftist thought and on the other with its remaining holdovers of Stalinism and anti-Semitism. I had my Bar Mitzvah the week of the Cuban Missile Crisis and by that time, it wasn't so much the Soviet Union perceived as an evil empire in my home, as much as Kennedy representing the best we could expect of the American political process. Also bear in mind that at twelve and thirteen you can't find a more conservative bunch. If you gave kids the vote, they'd all vote for Nazism immediately, because they're really impressed with uniforms and shiny black boots.

In the debating clubs in junior high school, we'd have these long discussions about nuking the Soviet Union. We were indoctrinated by every possible means into believing — and I don't say this damningly, this is not American self-hatred, this is just the way it was — that it was an accepted world view that everybody in the world wanted to be an American, that we were of an envied society, being an American was the highest goal anyone could achieve. Bear in mind, I was living on welfare at the time so there was an irony there. But even on welfare, our standard of living was considerably higher, as we perceived it, because we were fed on the idea of material goods. With the emblemology of these two monolithic world powers, we knew which side we were on. I believe the only way you can deal with politics in popular terms is to trivialise it to a human scale. I've insisted that the real issue of the Cold War for my generation was not to be nuked to kingdom come before we lost our virginity.

What is your fascination with Russia?

The first character I ever created was a Russian spaceman when I was 16 years old at high school. His first name was Nikta, not Nikita. I love the music, I'm fascinated by the physical look and scale of the country. One of my favourite novels is a very minor western novel written in the early Seventies called *The Cowboy and the Cossack* about a cattle-drive across Siberia in the summer ▶





'BRING ME LENIN'S BODY, SO THAT THE GREAT WHITE FATHER OF THE REVOLUTION MAY REST EASY WITH HIS PAN-AFRICAN CHILDREN.' THE PRICE IS RIGHT FOR GRAVE ROBBERY IN CHAYKIN'S DISNEYWORLD MOSCOW.

▷ of 1888 with eighteen Montana cowboys and eighteen rebel cos-sacks. I have an obsession with Russia and a fear of visiting there. I've never been further East than Italy. Going there would be satisfying some fantasies and destroying others. As for my research, it all pre-dates 1940, books like John Abbey's *I Photographed Russia*, and a lot of it's come out of conversations over the years with Michael Moorcock, another ardent Russophile.

It's becoming clear now that the 'threat' of Soviet world domination has in reality been a handy justification for America to do some secret empire-building of her own.

It's obvious that America's an imperialist nation – it's a military power. In the Sixties, imperialism became a swear word thrown back and forth between two empires. My feeling is that this country had its golden moment between 1945 and 1950 and immediately thereafter started sliding downhill. Its foreign policy has just established itself as a negation of Soviet foreign policy.

In your American Flagg! futureworld, you've shifted that see-saw balance of power away from either America or the Soviet Union.

Yes, as I believe it naturally will. The Soviet Union has never been able to produce a consumer product that satisfies a consumer need, because without the level of competition required for that in a consumer society, you produce mediocre goods. Whereas the United States continues to pay outlandish prices to price-gouging

ersatz capitalists. Capitalism is supposed to be a free market, whereas capitalists here base most of their success on price-fixing.

You've transplanted the Flagg! characters to the Soviet Union. What are they going to find there?

I'm not doing a realistically researched Soviet Union. I'm doing a cartoon Soviet Union, desperately trying to catch up with the world by American standards of 1958. I'm fascinated by the Soviet perception of America. The idea that the CIA would be the bad guys on Soviet television – I'd love to see that stuff! I've always believed that the positive future of the planet lies in the United States and the Soviet Union allying to form a co-prosperity sphere along the lines of the Axis in the Second World War.

Reuben Flagg is a *Candide*-like character, confused by his environment, having his fantasies destroyed by the actual truth. The Moscow he's going to is like Piccadilly Circus, it's consumerised, covered in neon with cyrillic lettering, 'This way to Lenin's tomb', that kinda stuff. It's Moscow as if Walt Disney and Molotov had gotten together. What I'm working on now is the theft of Lenin's body to be auctioned to the highest bidder and the International Soviet Surf Invitational. The top surfer is Ian Cambridge, grandson of British agents who sold out to the Soviets in the Fifties, like Philby and Burgess. So he's a Russian whose name is Cam-▷

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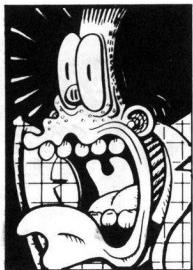
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► bridge. Why not? There was a Soviet journalist touring this country a few months back, whose mother was Russian and whose father was an American World War Two veteran, and she looked and dressed like a black woman from New York city and spoke with a complete Soviet accent. Bizarre.

You're doing this with your tongue very firmly in your cheek, but what are your opinions on the Americanisation of Russia.

It shouldn't be done, because I wouldn't want the United States Sovietised either. The Soviet Union seems to me a hard place to live. The oppressive nature of the police, the rampant alcoholism caused by the perceived meaninglessness of life, the lack of competition – I like competition – these are not things I'd want brought into my system. On the other hand, they are not ready to be Americanised, they're not a Western country, they're Eastern. They have much more in common with Asia. Most Americans believe the Russians are just like us, they just speak a different language. That's just bullshit, we're all different.



The problem with the Soviet Union is that it can be romanticised but it remains a fascist police state. And for what it's worth, the United States is not a fascist police state. It's run by a bunch of right-wing lunatics, but the body of government that the United States is based on has a number of built-in protections from that creeping fascism. It was disconcerting when Oliver North was testifying to see 'Ollie for President' signs and also heartening to realise that they went away as fast as greased shit. I believe he's lost all credibility now, but when he testifies again, I'm hoping he brings George Bush down.

I take it you didn't vote for Reagan then?

I didn't vote for Reagan at any time. But that has become one of the great American lies, as in 'I've always worn cowboy boots'. You won't find anyone who's ever voted for Reagan. I can sign an affidavit quite frankly, and I've got the photos of myself going to Woodstock in my cowboy boots!

Despite Evidence To The Contrary All Zacariah's Friends Knew He Was Rad



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The letter to Irina



MY DEAR COUSIN IRINA, LIKE LAST YEAR ANTON AND I SPENT NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE SOUVERINE'S. YOU KNOW, ALEXIS AND HIS YOUNG WIFE OLGA... THEY HAVE AN ISBA JUST OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE...



WE GOT THERE ABOUT NINE. THE AIR WAS BRACING AND THE SKY WAS JEWELLED WITH THE FINEST STARS, AS IF IT TOO WAS WAITING FOR THE NEW YEAR...



YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVE TO TRAVEL AT NIGHT BY SLEIGH AND THAT NIGHT, AS I SAT IN MY LOVELY NEW DRESS (ONLY JUST FINISHED) NEXT TO ANTON, I FELT THAT I WAS IN FOR A MARVELLOUS EVENING...



ALEXIS SOUVERINE IS A CHARMING AND COURTEOUS MAN. HE LIFTED ME UP AND KISSED ME ON BOTH CHEEKS...

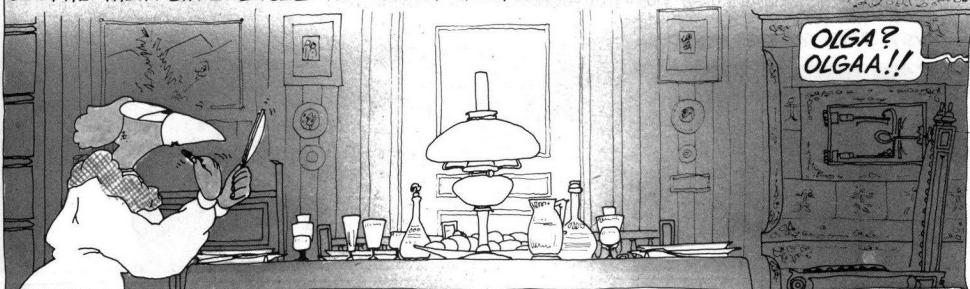
GOOD EVENING NATALIA IVANOVA, HOW ARE YOU?

GOOD EVENING ALEXIS,
HAPPY NEW YEAR...



ALEXIS IS A CHILDHOOD FRIEND OF ANTON'S. ALTHOUGH ALEXIS' FAMILY ARE INCREDIBLY RICH, DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENCES THE TWO OF THEM HAVE REMAINED FRIENDS...

OLGA?
OLGAA!!

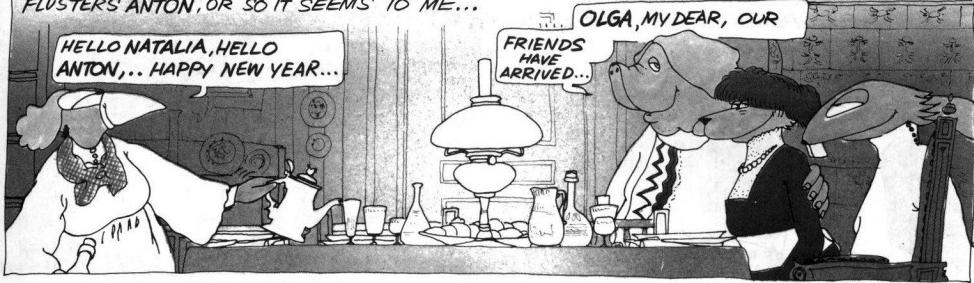


OLGA WELCOMED US IN WITH THAT MYSTERIOUS MARVELLOUS SMILE OF HERS, THAT REALLY FLUSTERS ANTON, OR SO IT SEEMS TO ME...

HELLO NATALIA, HELLO
ANTON,... HAPPY NEW YEAR...

OLGA, MY DEAR, OUR

FRIENDS
HAVE
ARRIVED...



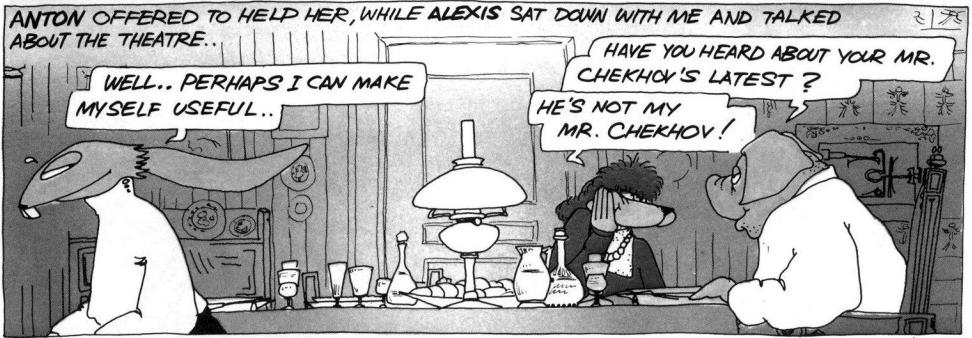
AND WHEN ALEXIS (WHO'S GOT A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOUR) ASKED ANTON WHY HE DIDN'T KISS OLGA, MY POOR HUSBAND BLUSHED BRIGHT RED...

COME ALONG ANTON, WHY
DON'T YOU GIVE
OLGA A KISS?

SHALL WE KISS?

SHALL WE KISS?..





ALEXIS DOESN'T CARE FOR THAT AUTHOR, HE'S ALWAYS BEING IRONIC ABOUT HIM...

"HE'S" NOT SATISFIED WITH WRITING NOVELS...

OH, ALEXIS!..
YOU'RE NOT FAIR...

WHEN YOU COME IRINA, WE MUST GO AND SEE ALEXIS, I'M DYING FOR YOU TO MEET HIM...

ANTON! NO! NOT HERE, MY LOVE!!

YES! YES!..

..AND THEN PEOPLE SAY (AND YOU KNOW WHAT 'PEOPLE SAY' MEANS) THAT HIS PLAY CRITICISES LIFE IN OUR COUNTRY!

OH ALEXIS!
YOU'RE NOT FAIR...

HE IS SO FINE, SO CULTIVATED (I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD HOW HE COULD HAVE MARRIED OLGA, SHE DOESN'T LIKE THEATRE OR LITERATURE)...

YOU'RE MAD! STOP! STOP!
YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY!

I DRIVE YOU CRAZY, EH?
I DRIVE YOU CRAZY?

HE'S A CYNIC, MY DEAR FRIEND! A CYNIC!

OH ALEXIS! YOU'RE
NOT FAIR...

I MUST ADMIT THAT EVERY MOMENT I SHARE WITH ALEXIS IN THAT SPIRITUAL COMMUNION IS A JOY COMPARED TO MY EVERYDAY LIFE, WHICH IS, ALAS, QUITE EMPTY.

NO! NO! ANTON.. NOT THAT.. ANTON!!! MY LOVE!!

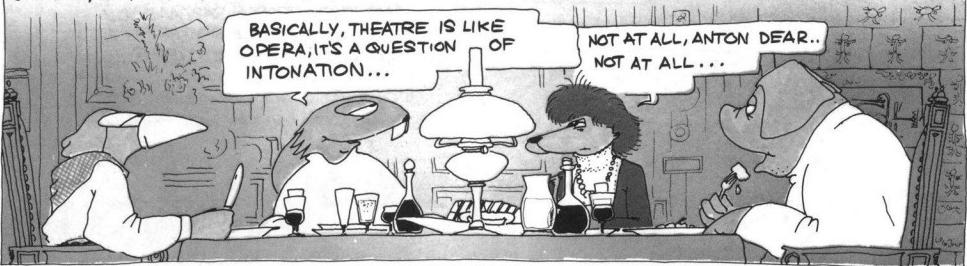
BESIDES, HE WAS A DOCTOR AND YOU KNOW HOW CYNICAL DOCTORS ARE!

OH, ALEXIS!
YOU'RE NOT FAIR...

Poor Anton came in from the kitchen, his face flushed scarlet from the heat of the ovens; Olga brought in a pot of kulebiaka that smelled delicious..



DURING THE MEAL, ALEXIS AND I WENT ON DISCUSSING THEATRE. ANTON TRIED TO JOIN IN, BUT THE POOR DEAR KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THEATRE (OR ART IN GENERAL)...



THEN WE SANG SOME LOVELY SONGS. ALEXIS CRACKED SOME JOKES DURING DESSERT (ALEXIS HAS A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOUR)...



THEN THERE WERE LIQUEURS.. SOME MORE SONGS FOLLOWED BY MORE LIQUEURS..

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH, OLGA!! CHEERS

WE ENDED UP LEAVING AT DAWN... IT HAD SNOWED AND THE AIR WAS CRISP...

OFF YOU GO! BYE!
BYE! COME BACK SOON!
OH! ALEXIS, YOU'RE A BIT
TIPSY... GOODBYE ANTON
GOODBYE OLGA...

ON THE WAY BACK I SNUGGLED UP TO ANTON AND WAS LULLED TO SLEEP BY THE LITTLE SLEIGH BELL...

ANTON,.. DO YOU THINK
OLGA WOULD EVER BE UNFAITHFUL
TO ALEXIS ?

WELL, DEAR IRINA, IT WAS A LOVELY NIGHT. LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU,

SLEEP, NATALIA, SLEEP.

- KRAK

DRING DRING DRING

YOURS,

Natalia Gramona

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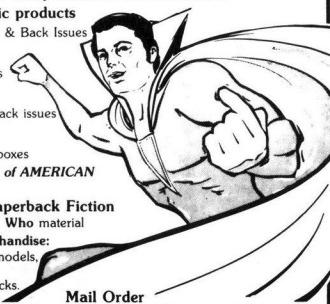
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War Stories anthology of true experiences in the military, editor Joyce Brabner was commissioned by the Christie Institute to produce a graphic novel about their case. The result will be *Brought To Light: Thirty Years of Assassination, Drug-Smuggling, Gun-Running and Covert Wars that Robbed America and Betrayed the Constitution*. Joyce Brabner and co-writer Alan Moore reveal how they will report this exposé through the new Comics Journalism.



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BUT SURELY THAT'S A MATTER OF OPINION...

KBOOSH!

REVELATIONS!

JOYCE BRABNER

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE, apparently, undertook a study to determine what was the easiest way for people to learn safety procedures or equipment disassembly. They found that out of all the choices, from straight text, illustrated text, text with photos, and comic books, it was comic books that produced the best understanding, the most recall of information. I see comics being used as pocket-documentaries, completed at the story-board stage and easily passed around and there was a nice implied justice in taking advantage of some of the military's own research to help take the bastards apart!

The Christic Institute have two different ways of explaining this lawsuit, because it's the result of two independent investigations, which connected and united at a critical point. Firstly, Christic were tracing a pattern of US Government-backed activities under the Racketeering and Corrupt Organisations Act, from Cuba and before through Vietnam, Iran, Chile, ending up in Central America. And this is where the second explanation comes in.

This begins with the bombing of a press conference on May 30th 1984 at La Penca on the Nicaraguan side of the San José river opposite Costa Rica. The conference was held by Eden Pastora, also known as the 'Renegade Contra'. He was a sort of hero of the Nicaraguan revolution, who'd become disillusioned with the Sandinistas, but wasn't going to pair up with the Somosans. A Right-wing Libyan terrorist, posing as a Danish journalist, set off a bomb, which was intended to kill everybody. At the last minute it was moved. Even so, eight people did die, and twenty eight were seriously injured. Two survivors, American journalists Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, were determined to find out what the hell really happened. Pastora had been mouthing off about the CIA pressuring him, trying to run his show. Tony and Martha found out that the attack was a calculated effort to manipulate world opinion, to put the blame on the Sandinistas and drum up support for the Contras. They traced the Libyan terrorist back to a secret group affiliated to the CIA, a group behind the same covert activities unearthed by the Christic Institute.

This is where Christic became involved, because their case was not getting into the courts. The Attorney General was ignoring the evidence. Now they had a freelance journalist whose equipment was trashed, whose hand was mangled, who'd had thirteen operations, plastic surgery to put himself together. It was Tony Avirgan's case

that gave Christic a way into the courts.

I found both approaches equally compelling, so Tom Yeates and I will tell the La Penca bombing story in 'Flashpoint', while Alan and Bill explain the covert activities in 'Shadowplay'. And there'll be background material from Paul Mavrides, conspiracy-untangler par excellence. As for when the actual trial will begin, this is being argued right now. Obviously the present administration has a great deal to gain if they can procrastinate. The success of this lawsuit has nothing to do with whether anybody puts Oliver North in jail. It's got to do with 'bringing to light' why Oliver North was there to begin with. That's the bottom line.

ALAN MOORE

I WAS ASKED IF I WANTED TO THROW IN MY LOT with a small, relatively powerless group of lawyers who were taking on an organisation believed to include most of the CIA, the American Presidency, the Mafia. Hey, I'm a pretty radical dude, but I'm not a complete idiot. I had to think about it for some time before saying yes. There's no reason why a CIA hit squad should be sent here to Northampton to despatch leaden justice. But on the other hand, who ever said these people made sense? These are people who had plans to destroy Castro's beard with defoliant, to stage the Second Coming in the Bay of Pigs. These people are not rational!

I'd known fragments of it before, but this lawsuit has given me a much more coherent view of the whole picture. I'm telling the history of the Shadow Government of America, from the end of the Second World War, when the OSS became the CIA, through China, Italy, Vietnam and other campaigns against communism, Kennedy's assassination, to the present day in Central America. Christic want to win enough ground so that they can legitimately extend their field of search. The bigger the fishing expedition they can put on, the bigger the fish they can catch. Reagan and Bush are implicated well beyond their eyebrows.

I'm humanising these vast subjects by having the story narrated by a shadowy figure in a bar. It's the CIA eagle, only with the demeanour of an out-of-town salesman, drunk, cheating on his wife, hacking cough, cynical and anxious to talk to somebody. The reader sits next to this hideous representation of America's covert warfare activities that spills its whole life story, as drunks are prone to do in bars. In 1960, when Nixon was running against Kennedy in the Presidential elections, nobody had to do a detailed rundown of why Nixon's policies were wrong for America. All they had

to do was put out a poster saying 'Would you buy a used car from this man?' People cannot understand the Great Evil, but they can understand a scaled-down human evil, like a dishonest used-car salesman or a seedy company rep. The idea owes a lot to Robert Altman's film *Secret Honour*, set in one room in which Nixon sits alone talking into a tape-recorder for two hours. Riveting cinema – it shows the power of a single person talking.

We alternate this with flashbacks of what he's talking about. I'm not going for a cold literal representation, I'm using Bill's considerable talents to emphasise the emotional nightmarish dimension. Because people have become deadened to the human importance of all this stuff. They can hear about so many people being killed and it doesn't mean anything.

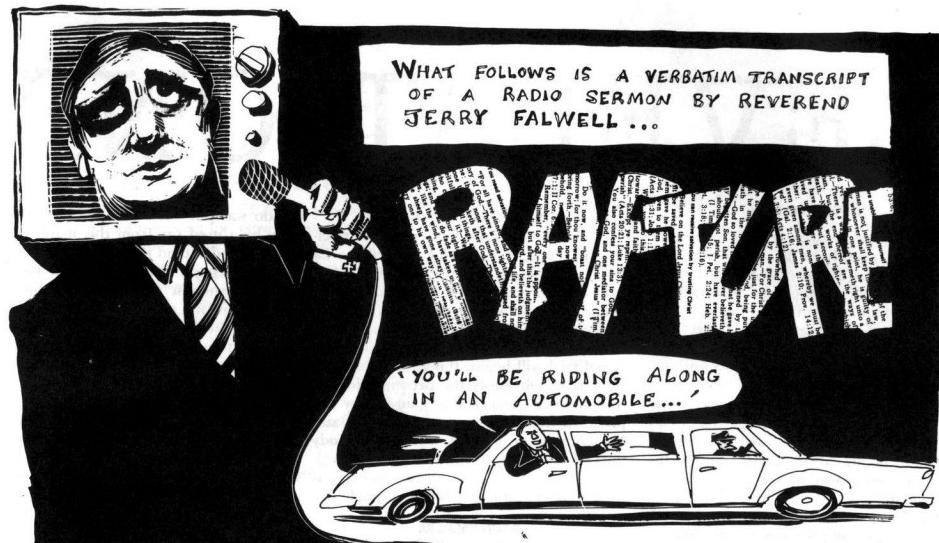
The story opens with a brief tour through the streets of this surreal shadow version of America, where bills of no denomination less than a million dollars clog the drains up to knee height, where SS men, Mafia dons, heroin peddlers, all sharing candy floss, queue up at the rifle range. I'm asking the reader to accept that this is absolutely true – it's on that scale of incredibility. The CIA eagle loves spy novels and says, 'They're just like real life – only more believable.'

If you've got no grasp of the real world, you can believe anything. Our traditional sources of information, our schools, newspapers, seem to have dried up or been poisoned. More than ever, the onus today is on the entertainment media, the media people seek out wilfully. If those media are used responsibly, and not allowed to degenerate into mindless pap, then perhaps the popular arts will have the function that they always should have had. We can actually be useful now. In the information war, the ordinary person has access to more information than ever before. But there are equally powerful forces that have a vested interest in manipulating information, distracting people with stories about the Royal family and soap operas. The frightening thought is that comics may be one of the only untainted sources of information available to a readership. So it becomes vital that, no matter what you say, say it well, say it true and say it clearly.

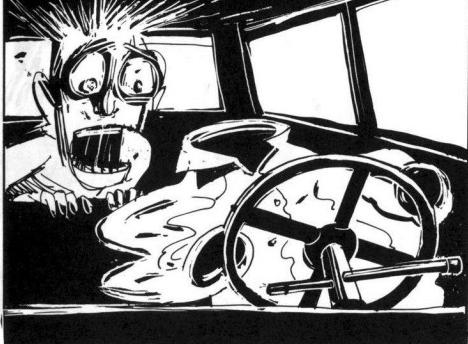
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Brought To Light is co-published by Eclipse Comics and Warner Books in the US, with a Titan edition for the UK. The official publication date is November 1st, just in time for the Presidential Elections, though copies should be available by late September.

For a copy of the *Contrigate Affidavit* and more details, send a contribution of \$20 or more to: The Christic Institute, 1322-24 N. Capitol Street NW, Washington, DC 20002, USA.



THAT UNSAVED PERSON OR PERSONS IN THE AUTOMOBILE WILL SUDDENLY BE STARTLED TO FIND THAT THE CAR IS MOVING ALONG WITHOUT A DRIVER...



...AND SUDDENLY SOMEWHERE CRASHES!

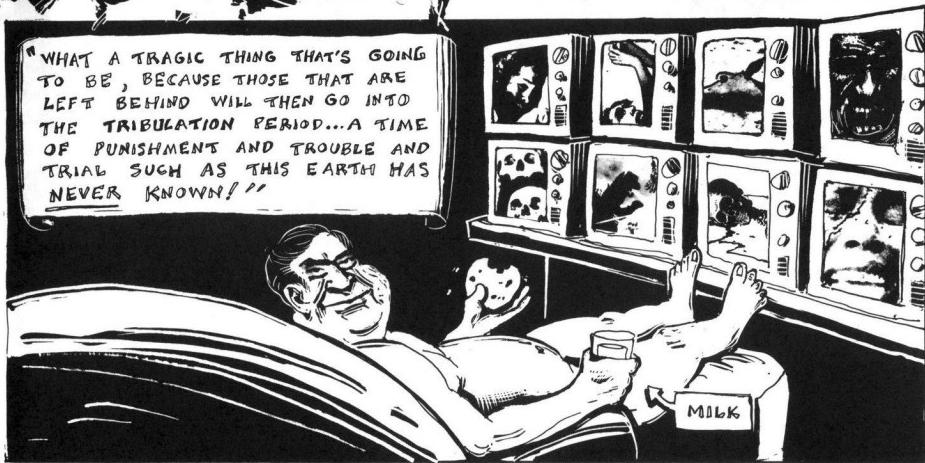


"THESE SAVED PEOPLE IN THE CAR HAVE DISAPPEARED. OTHER CARS ON THE HIGHWAY DRIVEN BY BELIEVERS WILL SUDDENLY BE OUT OF CONTROL!!

AND STARK PANDEMONIUM WILL OCCUR ON THAT HIGHWAY AND EVERY HIGHWAY IN THE WORLD

WHERE CHRISTIANS ARE CAUGHT-AWAY FROM THE DRIVER'S WHEEL..."

"WHAT A TRAGIC THING THAT'S GOING TO BE, BECAUSE THOSE THAT ARE LEFT BEHIND WILL THEN GO INTO THE TRIBULATION PERIOD...A TIME OF PUNISHMENT AND TROUBLE AND TRIAL SUCH AS THIS EARTH HAS NEVER KNOWN!"



"AND THAT SEVEN
YEAR PERIOD...

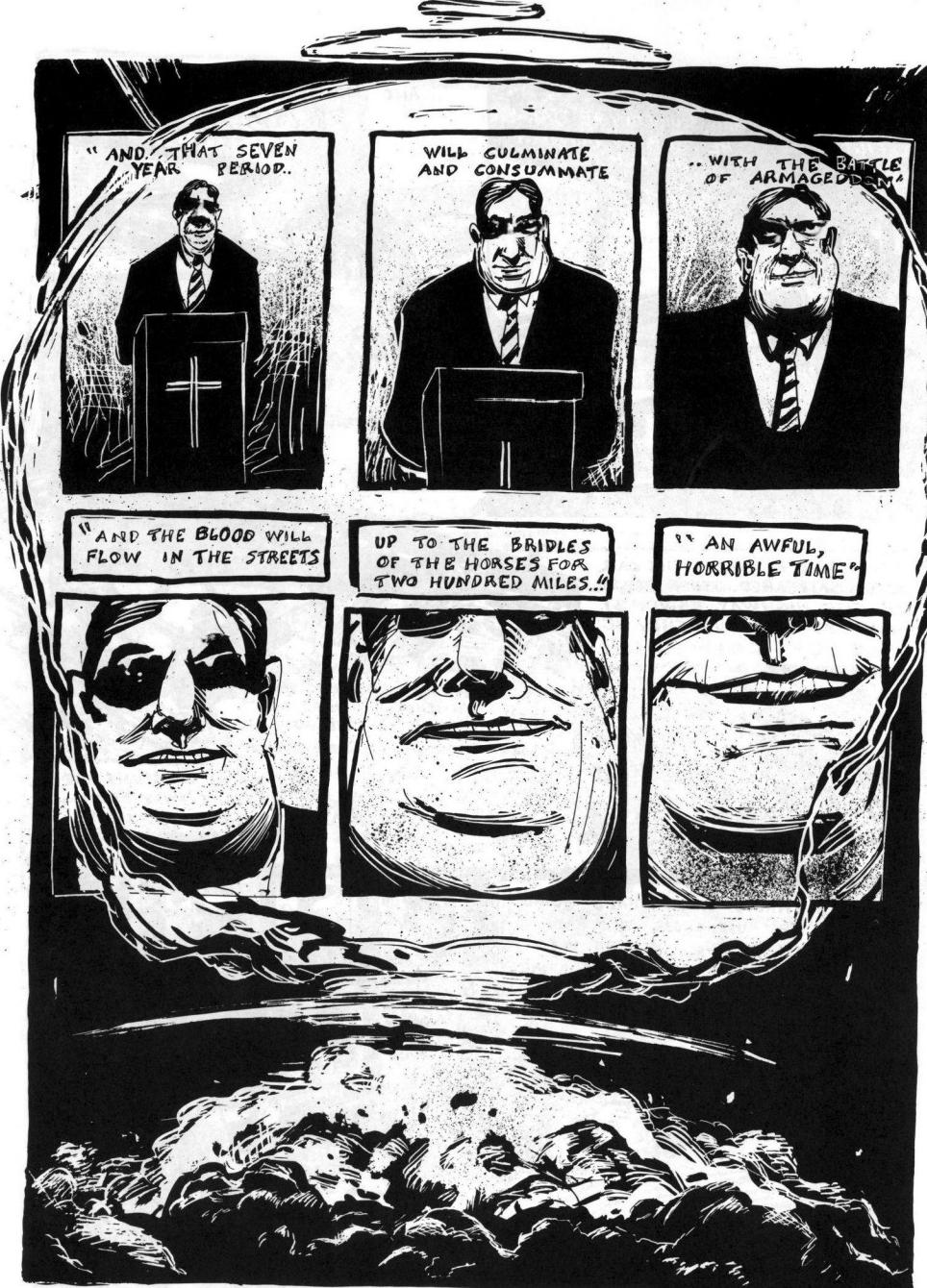
WILL CULMINATE
AND CONSUMMATE

...WITH THE BATTLE
OF ARMAGEDDON!"

"AND THE BLOOD WILL
FLOW IN THE STREETS

UP TO THE BRIDLES
OF THE HORSES FOR
TWO HUNDRED MILES..."

"AN AWFUL,
HORRIBLE TIME"



" WELL...
NUCLEAR
WAR..."

AND THE SECOND
COMING OF JESUS
CHRIST

ARMAGEDDON

AND THE
COMING WAR
WITH
RUSSIA

WHAT DOES ALL THIS
HAVE TO DO AND TO
SAY WITH AND TO YOU,

AND ME?"



"IT SAYS THIS..
PREPARE TO MEET
THY GOD!"

...IF YOU KNOW THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR
SAVIOR, NONE OF THIS
SHOULD BRING FEAR
TO YOUR HEART....

BECAUSE WE'RE GOING
UP IN THE RAPTURE
BEFORE ANY OF IT
OCCURS!"

'PERHAPS IT'S MY PAST that makes me restless, makes me want to keep moving.' Enki Bilal's childhood in Belgrade, Yugoslavia was cut short when, as a boy of nine, he was wrenched from the troubled city and resettled in 1960 in Paris. There in the Seventies he found his career as a bande dessinéateur or comics artist, and since winning *Pilote* magazine's talent search competition, there's been no looking back. Today's he has become one of France's most acclaimed BD creators, feted with the field's top honours.

Not content with that, Bilal is now switching from paper to celluloid as he directs his first film. Moscow is the location and Bilal has started shooting there on *Bunker Palace Hotel* with Charlotte Rampling and Jean-Louis Trintignant. That much is known; as for the story, Bilal is deliberately shrouding it in secrecy. 'All I can tell you is that it's not an adaptation of an album, it's an original screenplay, somewhere between *Hunting Party* and *The Woman Trap*. Pierre Christin, my old accomplice, is helping me with the script, and Alain Resnais has agreed to be my technical adviser.'

It was leading director Alain Resnais who commissioned Bilal's first work in the cinema, the poster for his film *My American Uncle*. From that came the opportunity to work on the set designs for Resnais' *Life is a Bed of Roses*, for which he produced beautiful glass paintings for the story's fantasy scenes.

Then came another opportunity, in London, where Michael Mann was making a film called *The Keep*. 'He wasn't happy with the look of the monster and called me because he knew my albums. He told me that all the albums of French BD artists like Druillet, Moebius, Mezieres and myself were lying around in every American film studio. They've been copying from them for years! Ask Mezieres, Moebius, Druillet, they've all got examples of it.' At least now Bilal was getting asked to contribute to productions, as for example with preparatory drawings for *The Name of the Rose*. And for a while plans were advancing for a screen adaptation of Christin & Bi-

lal's album, *The Ranks of the Black Order*.

Bilal's own preferences in films reflect his Eastern European sensibilities. 'I adore the films of the Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky. He was always very close to his country. His film *Mirror* is rooted in the Russian soil. I love Czech, Yugoslav and Polish cinema. Jerzy Skolimowski is a great film-maker, for example in *The Lightship*. I feel particularly close to the universe of the Polish director Zulawsky. In *Possession* and *La Femme Publique*, his cinematic approach is very original, very violent, he plays with the viewer, the actors, everyone, dealing directly and uncompromisingly with his fantasies.'

Ever since he was young, Bilal has had a passion for the big screen, going every Sunday to the movies, mainly westerns. When he was nine, he landed the part in a short film being made in Belgrade. 'It was about two street kids wandering round the city. They'd stop and sketch out fights in chalk on the pavements, one drawing cowboys, the other Indians. Being a budding actor suddenly expanded my universe.' But as luck would have it, he had to leave Yugoslavia before the film was completed and never found out what happened to it.

Recently he returned to Belgrade, for the first time in many years, to research his latest collaboration with Pierre Christin. Together they have compiled a travelogue of reportage-fictions from five different cities, just published by Dargaud under the title *Coeurs Sanglants* ('Bleeding Hearts'). Starting with his photographs, Bilal paints over them, filtering reality through his memory and imagination. Some of this technique also appears in *The Woman Trap*, his second album in English from Catalan and Titan. This book gives a foretaste of his film, from its widescreen 'cinemascope' panels to its settings in delapidated future versions of London's Savoy and Berlin's Mauerpalast hotels. And there's the name of the exotic white-skinned femme fatale, Jill Bioskop. After all, 'Bioskop' is the Serbo-Croat for cinema.

-Paul Gravett

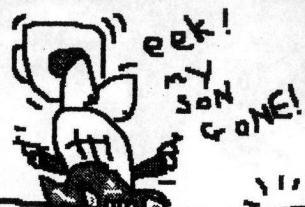


BUNKER PALACE HOTEL

Shrouded in secrecy, ENKI BILAL, illustrator of sensuous decadent futures, directs his first film – aided by Alain Resnais – in Moscow.

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS

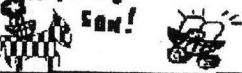
COWBOYS vs COSSACKS



BACK FROM THE WARS

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS

A LOST CHILD, THE
SAME AGE AS MY
DAUGHTER! I'LL
RAISE HIM AS
MY OWN SON!



THE COSSACK FINES A SON!

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS



THE COSSACK LOSES A DAUGHTER!

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS

A DAUGHTER!



IT MUST BE FATE! ...

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS



Dis is how you do

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS

(DAT'S MA GAL!)



GROWING UP MIGHTY FINE!

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS



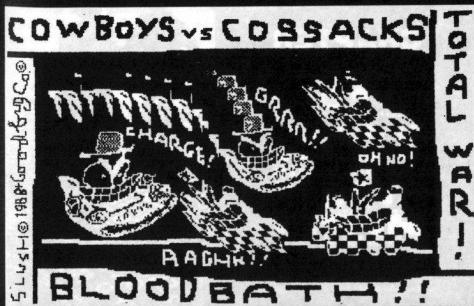
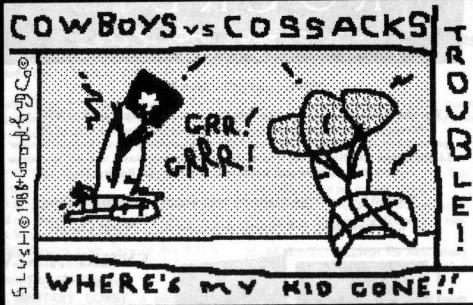
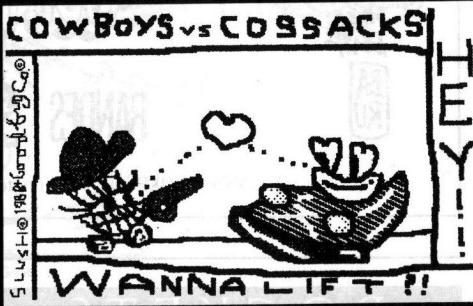
MIGHTY FINE GAL.

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS



COOL COSSACK PRINCE.

COWBOYS vs COSSACKS



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by Captain J. Star

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THE KEY TO THE SQUARES

(See the third page following for setting up the game.)

1. THE WHITE HOUSE: If you're on your own turf, you're OK! If not, then throw the dice again.

If it's EVEN, then you're on a diplomatic visit. Go to 3.

If it's ODD, then you're a stinking communist spy and are deported back to the USSR. Go to 18. If this happens, your government feels justified in taking retaliatory action. Throw the dice and if it's a six you change your mind; otherwise, deport the American back to the White House.

2. OVERPRODUCTION: Due to over production by the arms industry, add four missiles to the arsenal.

3. GOOD PRESS: Following an excellent interview on World Service radio, you're winning the propaganda war with the Peace groups. Have an extra move.

4. ARMS SUMMIT GOES BADLY: Put all thirty missiles on both sides back in the silos. If all the missiles are already in place, go to 15.

5. FALSE ALERT: Add one missile.

6. SUMMIT AGREEMENT: A Summit has agreed gradual losses. Each side (no matter who lands on the square) must lose six missiles each.

7. ARMS FREEZE: Your next two moves are unaffected by the squares on which you land.

8. INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT: One of your missiles goes off by accident but lands harmlessly in the ocean. This creates a furor and the other side feels justified in adding four new missiles.

9. THIRD WORLD CRISIS: An unstable Third World country has its own nuclear missiles. Add twice the number on the dice in missiles to the arena.

10. DIRTY TRICKS: Four previously obsolete and retired missiles are secretly returned to the arena.

11. BUDGET DEFICIT: Budget deficit causes a cut in the Arms Budget. Lose twice the number on the dice in missiles.

12. GOODWILL GESTURE: As a gesture of goodwill to the other side, 'retract' three missiles that were obsolete anyway.

13. PUT BACK THE NUCLEAR CLOCK: A government committed to unilateral disarmament gets into power. Lose three times the dice value in missiles and move back three spaces.

14. TALKS GO BADLY: The other side takes two moves

15. OBSOLETES REPLACED: Add three new missiles, wheeled in to replace 'obsolete' ones.

16. THE KREMLIN: If you're on your own turf, you're OK! If not, then throw the dice again.

If it's EVEN, then you're on a diplomatic visit. Go to 3.

If it's ODD then you're a stinking capitalist spy and are deported back to the USA. Go to 18. If this happens, your government feels justified in taking retaliatory action. Throw the dice. If it's a six, you change your mind; otherwise, deport the Russian back to the Kremlin.

17. MILITARY LOBBY: A military lobby gains control of the government. Social benefits cut and defense spending is doubled. Add twice the dice value in missiles.

18. BAD PRESS: Following an exposé on an investigative TV documentary, you are losing the propaganda war, so the other side takes two turns.

19. ARMS SUMMIT GOES WELL: Both sides reduce missiles by one third...

20. SUB SINKS: Submarine sinks at sea. Terrorists blamed. Lose three missiles.

21. INTERNATIONAL CRISIS LOOMS: Troubled times. Throw dice. If six, go forward seven squares; otherwise crisis averted.

22. CULTURAL EXCHANGE: Satellite links and visiting artists lead to more understanding. Remove four missiles.

23. SUMMIT AGREEMENT: A Summit has agreed gradual losses. Each side (no matter who lands on the square) must lose six missiles each.

24. TALKS GO WELL: Go to 12. Then move double the next dice throw in squares.

25. MISSILE CHECK: Government 'reclaims' missiles. Add twice the dice value in missiles.

26. SALES TO ALLIES: The Arms Industry sells three 'refined' missiles to allies. Add three to your silos.

27. BUDGET CUTS: Budget deficit causes cut in Defence Budget — lose twice dice value of missiles.

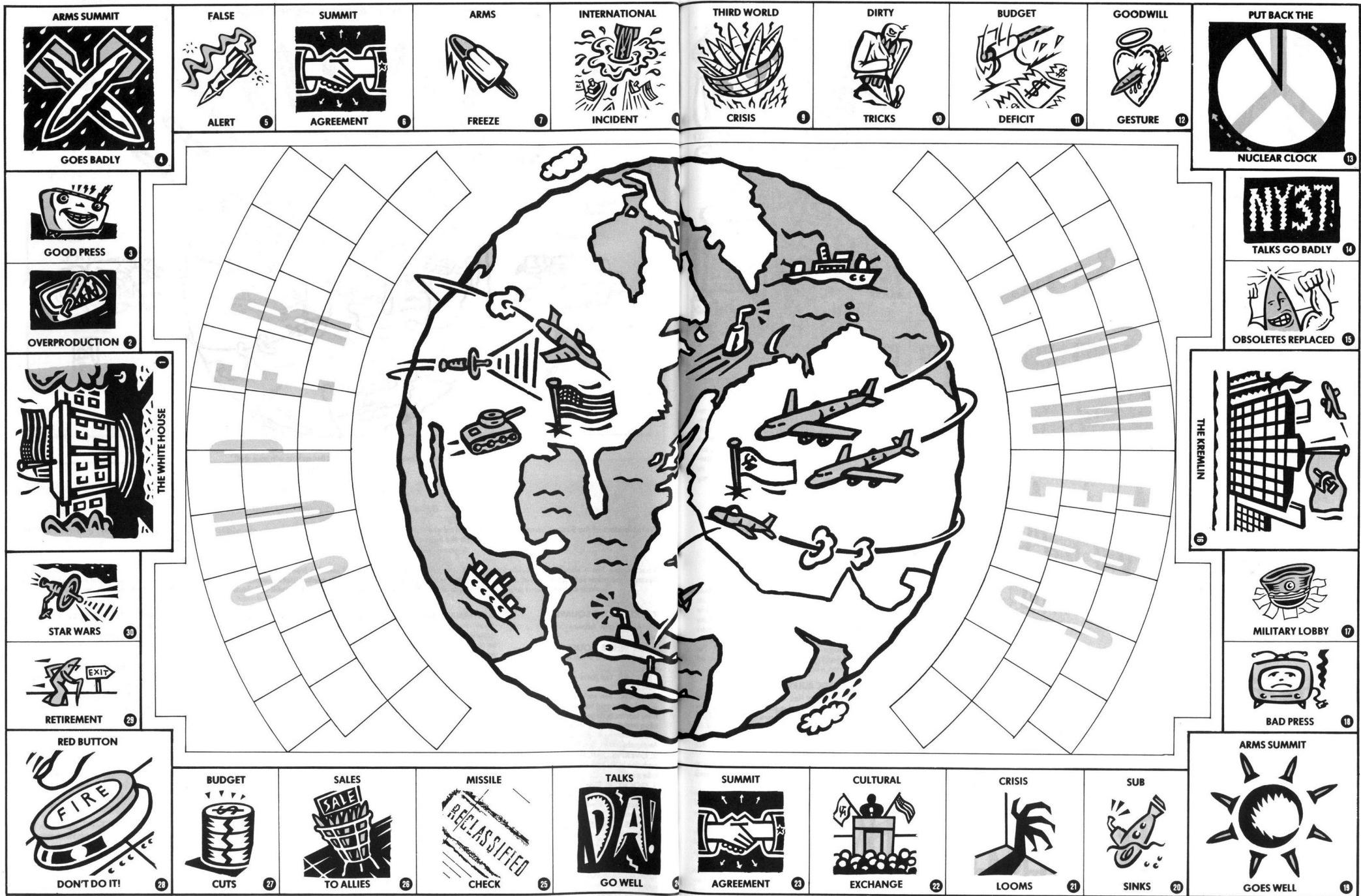
28. RED BUTTON! — DON'T DO IT!: Fully arm! Put all thirty missiles on your side back on the board. You must throw the dice to see if you push the button.

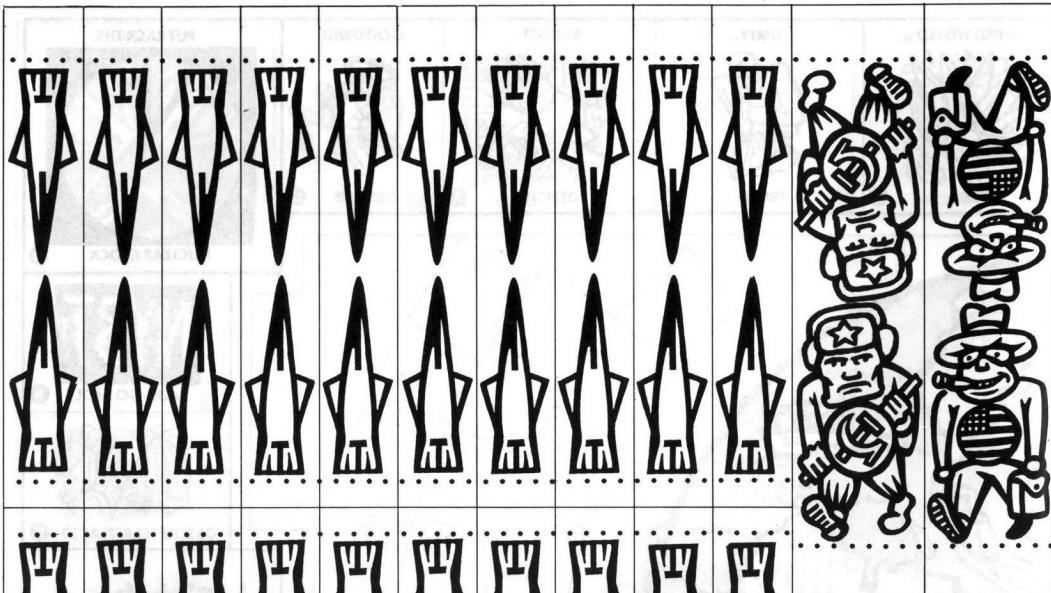
If you throw a six, the button is pushed. Count down from ten and then set light to the board and the game ends. Otherwise, continue thankfully.

29. RETIREMENT: Government agrees to retire twice the dice value in missiles. Move back three spaces.

30. STAR WARS: Retaliate against plans for other side's Star Wars project. Add five missiles.

BETWEEN THE LINES: *The New Maginot Line* by John Connell, pub: Secker and Warburg; *Nuclear Battlefields — Global Links in the Arms Race* by William Akin & Richard Fieldhouse, pub: Ballinger, Cambridge Massachusetts; *Atlas of Global Strategy* by Lawrence Freedman, pub: MacMillan.





SETTING UP THE GAME

This is a game for two players, an American representative of NATO and a Russian representative of the Warsaw Pact. Each side starts with thirty missiles in their silo squares – twenty tall ICBM's and ten short Cruise in the front – and there should be an extra thirty in reserve, mysteriously-located off the board where they are no danger to the ecology, which either side may need to draw on.



To make the pieces for the game, make three photocopies of the missiles and glue them onto sheets of thin card. Cut out the two figures onto the missiles, fold and glue so that they stand up. A tiny ball of Blu-Tak in the base makes them more stable. To prepare the board photocopy the page and glue them onto sturdy card. This should provide many hours of amusement on wet days, in dark corners, for idle hands.

BASIC RULES.

1. Players elect which of them is to be in The White House and in the Kremlin and place their representative on the corresponding square and argue until one of them lets the other throw the dice first.
2. Move around the board according to the dice throw in a nuclear clock-wise direction.
3. Players obey whatever instruction applies to the square they land on, unless one player lands on the square already occupied by the other.
4. If one player lands on the same square as the other, they must be getting quite chummy and agree to halve the number of missiles they have on both sides.
5. If an Arms Freeze (7) is in effect, this still holds true. If both land on the Red Button (28), the last player on the square must still proceed, as things are looking grave indeed!
6. If at any time there are no more missiles left in reserve to place on the board, the player responsible has obviously overspent on the Defence Budget. Go to 27.

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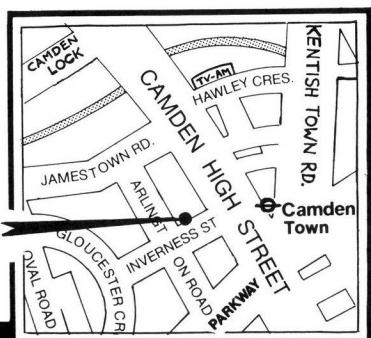
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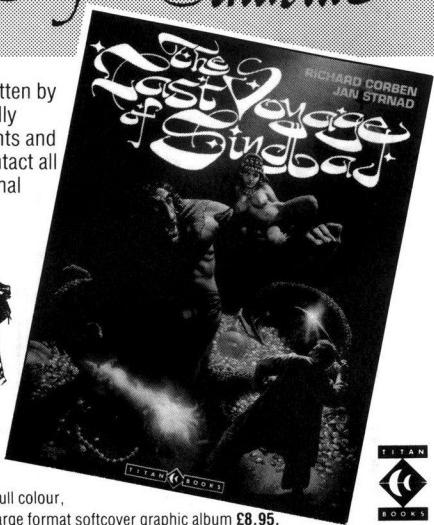
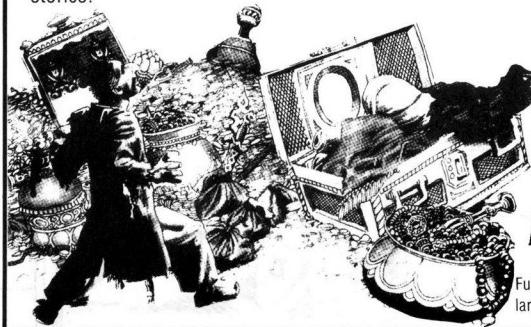


Религия



The Last Voyage of Sindbad

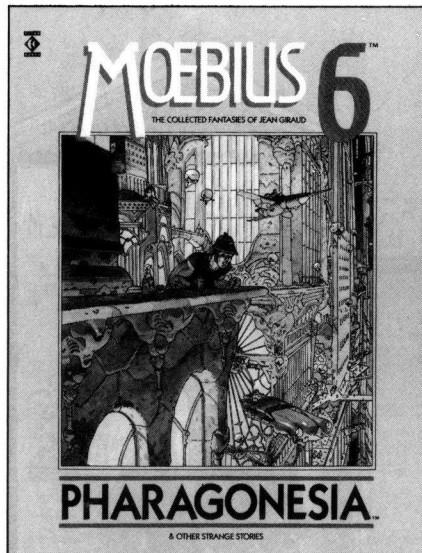
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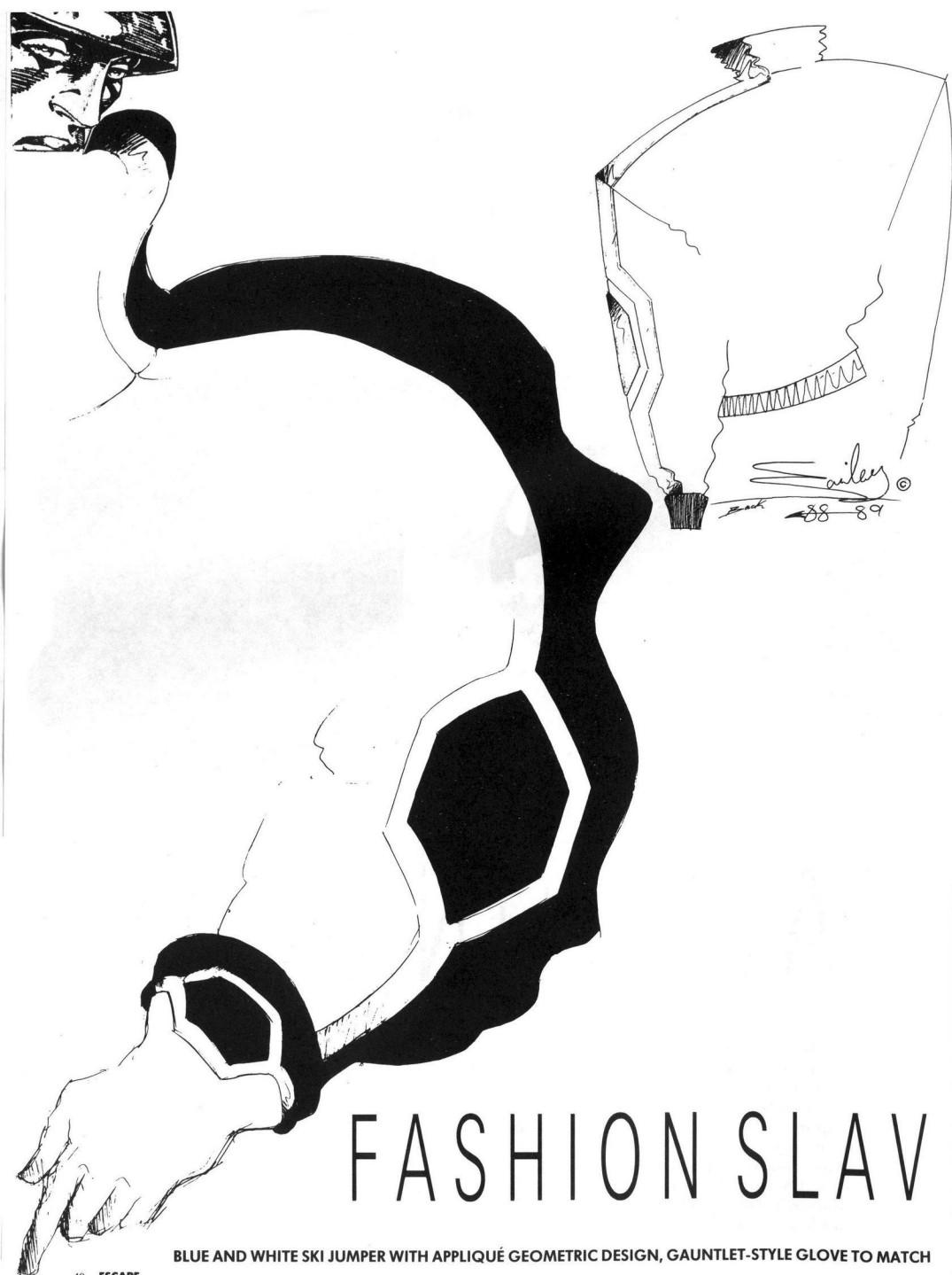
FASHION SLAV

YOUNG BRITISH designers inevitably gravitate to the Italian fashion capital Milan, to rub shoulder-pads with the cream of couture. **Trevor Bailey** stayed there for two inspirational spells with Versace and Moschino, but now he's back and making it in London.

In his new collection he cooks with two unlikely flavours, high Italian style and comic-book costumery. 'I've always liked superhero comics and been influenced by them. I like the theatricality of the costumes, but I try to pare it down to street level, so you don't need Thor's god-like build to wear it!'

Futuristic films are another big influence. 'I was really turned on by Syd Mead's designs for *Blade Runner*, and the tech noir of *Robocop*.' Trevor is keen to design for films and is developing a promotional video for his clothes, mixing live action with animated fashion drawings. Several of his drawings have been printed onto T-shirts, available from Ebony in South Moulton Street, London.

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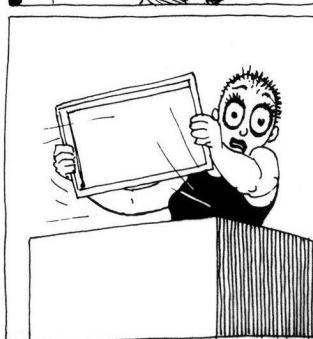
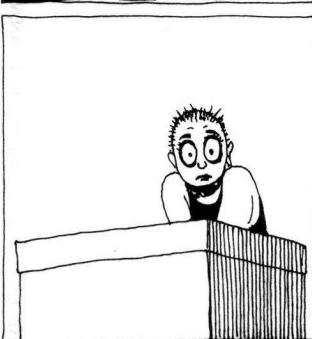
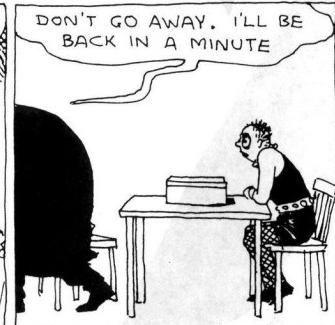
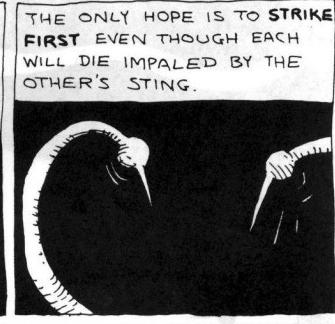
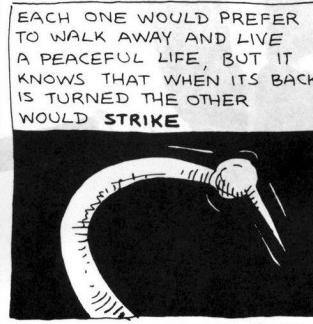
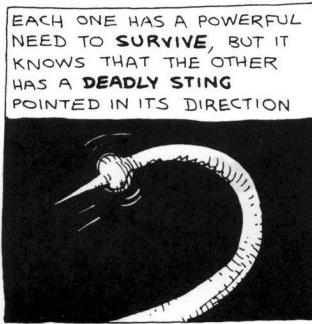


Trevor Bailey can be reached on 01-452 2357 and is open to commissions.

SHEEPSKIN JACKET IN BLACK AND TAN, WRAPOVER FRONT WITH LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINIUM RED STARS

SCORPIONS

BOLLAND 87



WINGS OF SONG

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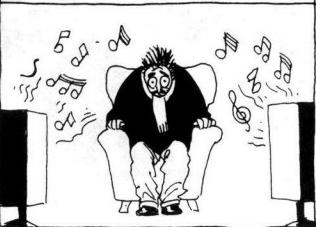


PERHAPS ONE EVENING YOU'D LIKE TO COME ROUND AND I COULD PLAY YOU...

I'M BUSY ALL THIS MONTH.



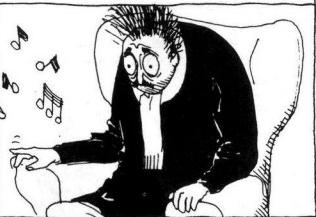
I SIT BACK AND I AM TRANSPORTED ON WINGS OF SONG TO EXOTIC PLACES LIKE PARAGUAY, BORNEO, LAPLAND, MONGOLIA, DALMATIA, TRANSYLVANIA.



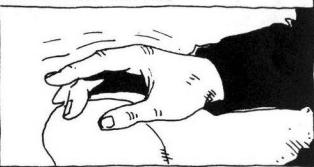
I'M PARTICULARLY FOND OF THE FOLK MUSIC OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: MOLDAVIA, MACEDONIA, BIELORUSSIA, BOSNIA, ARMENIA, FINLAND, BULGARIA AND SO ON.



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A GREAT FAVOURITE OF MINE IS HACHIG KAZARIAN AND HIS ARMENIAN ENSEMBLE.

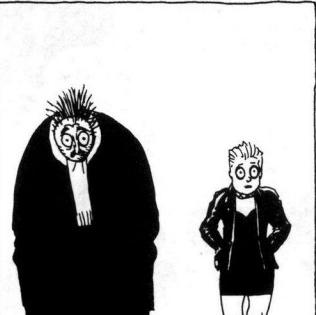


I HAD THE PLEASURE OF SEEING VASSILI BOBOROVSKI AND THE BOYS ALONG WITH THE LOVELY NATASHA ON A RECENT VISIT TO LENINGRAD.



THE SLIDES I TOOK OF ...

... AND THE NEXT



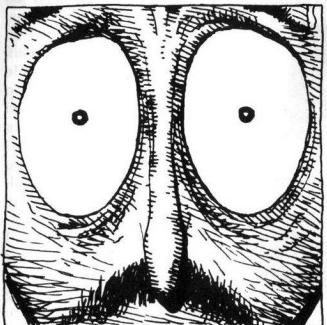
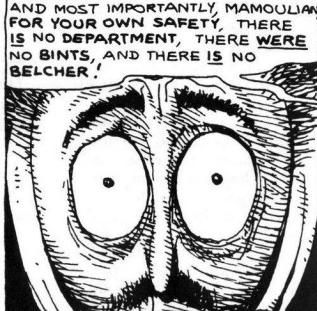
HUSH-HUSH

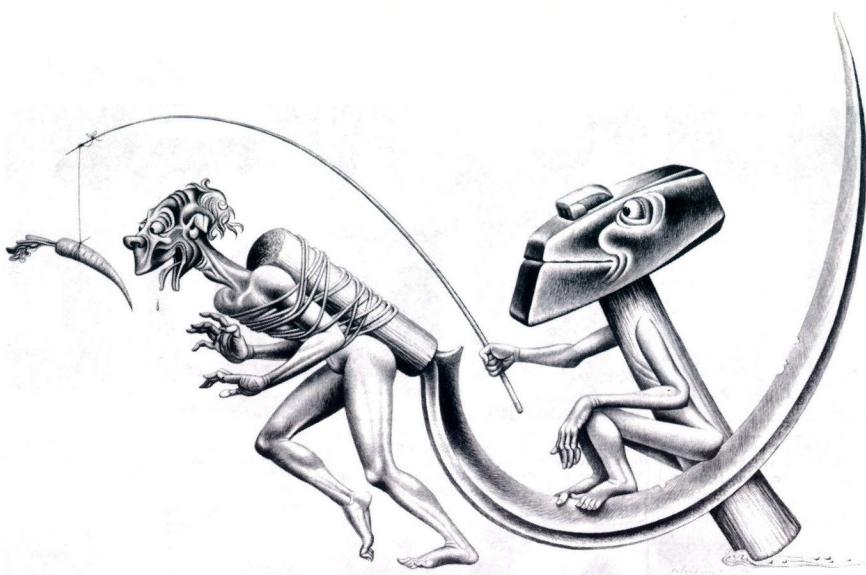
Bolland 13.12
87



IN TOO DEEP

Bolland 22.12
87





AS I SEE

BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF BEGUILED society women and problem child alike with his cool, lucid pictures of otherworldly goings on. Although probably best remembered today for the more than two hundred covers he painted for *Time* magazine, Artzybasheff is cherished in the hearts of those who worship at the altar of mysterio autentico for his visions of anthropomorphic machines, diseases of the psyche and spirit, and the daily life of a strange and frightening little paradise whose light pervades every image from his hand. Indeed, the lover of Artzybasheff can often use examples of his work to locate sympathetic individuals to associate with.

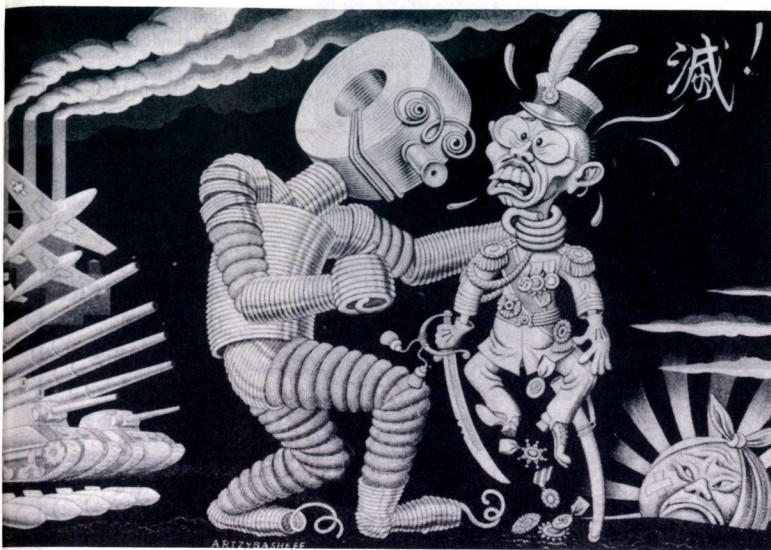
The dry facts are these: Boris Artzybasheff was born in 1899 in Kharkov, Russia. He served as a gunner in the White Army and immediately after the Revolution he slipped discreetly away to America on a freighter. Landing in New York in 1919 with the traditional pocketful of change, he obtained work in an engraving shop doing lettering and ornamental designs. He began to illus-

Cutting the apron-strings of Mother Russia after the Revolution, **BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF** ran to embrace the American dream. He became a Master-Illustrator, commissioned by Time, Life, and Esquire. During World War Two, he was particularly sensitive to the war in Europe and vehemently caricatured the enemy in Axis in Agony, a propaganda booklet which boasted, 'He hates in pain!' He also worked as an adviser to the US Department of State, Psychological Warfare Division. Living machinery, scenic moonscapes, hidden psychoses, all were suffused with his unique surreal vision. Jim Woodring, creator of *Jim* magazine, fishes inside the head of this genius of the bizarre



trate books and gradually built his reputation until his work was in heavy demand, a condition that endured until his death at the not-quite-ripe age of sixty-six. Among his most popular works are *Poor Shaydulla*, a story he wrote for Macmillan in 1931 which featured Bernard Shaw as Allah; his own adaptation of Aesop's *Fables*; his illustrations for Balzac's *Droll Stories*, *Gay Neck* and *Seven Simeons*; and numerous large magazine illustrations, notably a lyrically populated lunar landscape for *Life*.

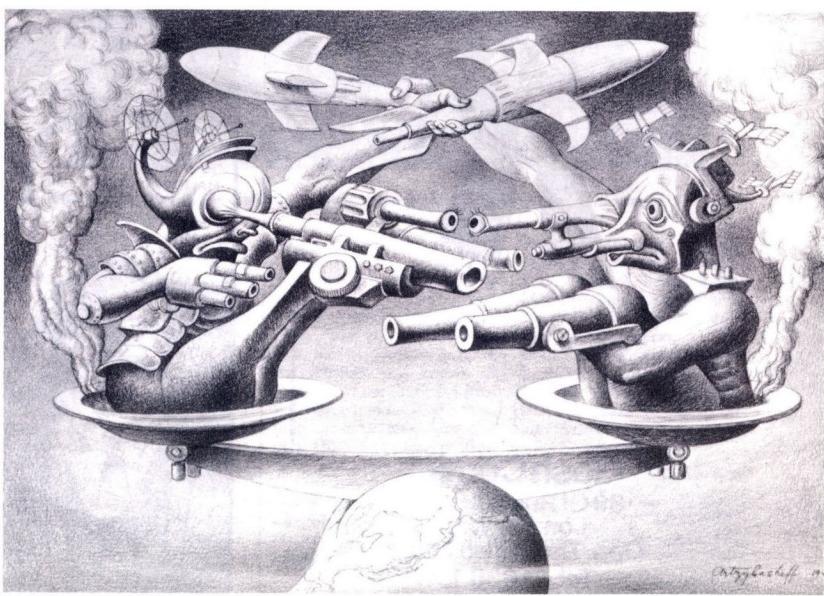
Although Artzybasheff worked almost entirely on commission, he invested all his efforts with a dynamic and sublime quirkiness that made even potentially dull subjects sit up and yodel. He did portraits of machine-shop equipment half-transformed into living beings, going about their business unsupervised in poetically unnerving industrial sheds. He specialised in seeing things differently than others did. Of this ability he wrote: 'As I see, so I draw. There is no need for me to smoke marijuana or opium, because, being slightly myopic, all I have to do



Steel-Wire Warrior: wartime propaganda and a promotion for the Wickwire Spencer Steel Company



*The Big Three:
The cover of Time,
May 14th, 1945*



The Balance of Power: post-War paranoias



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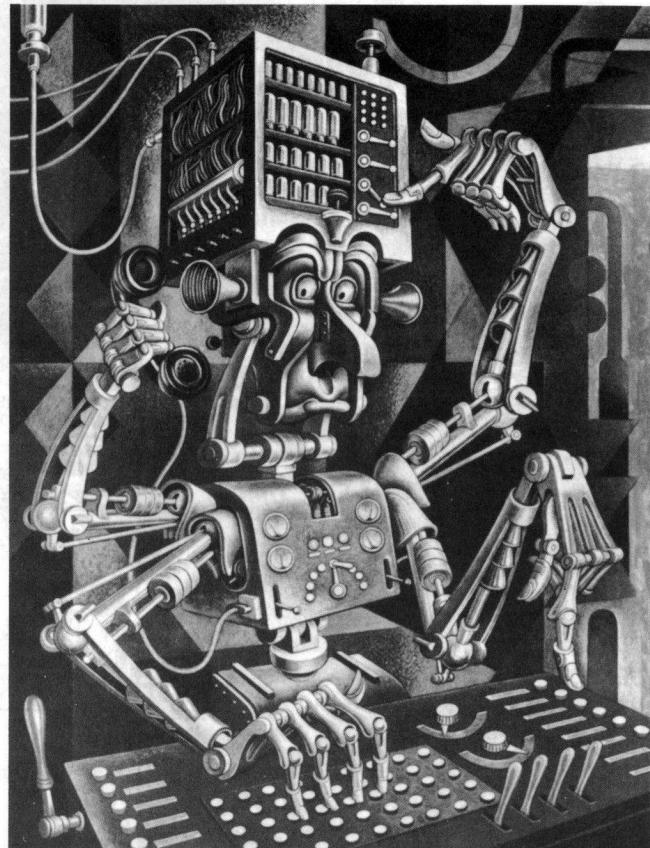
do is take off my glasses and the world around me looks that way.'

This is modesty on his part, of course. His gift was not in the shape of his eye but in the shape of his mind. He had an awareness of forces and beings that move unseen beneath the surface of mundane reality, and he displayed them to varying degrees in all his work. This quality was so evident that during World War Two, Artzybashev was asked to serve, and did, as an expert adviser to the US Department of State, Psychological Warfare Division.

His illustrations for *The Circus of Dr. Lao* by Charles G. Finney are among the most forced and undistracted of his visions of this hidden world; there is an unquestionable veracity to these abstract and seemingly alien vignettes that whispers to us with urgent familiarity. One comes away from these pictures with the feeling that Artzybashev, by virtue of his guileless nature, has been allowed to look over the right wall, and has seen that other world clearly.

I was ten or eleven when I (excuse me, mind if I just elbow my way in here?) first saw an Artzybashev picture. It was on a dust jacket for a book called *The Incomplete Enchanter*, and it showed a face made of a hand holding a pair of wistful eyeballs between the splayed finger. I never read the book, although I stared at that dust jacket long enough to have read it twice. The instant I saw it, a profound revelation engulfed me and I realised for the first time the immense, immeasurable power of the abstract image. I realised that this fanciful design represented something hidden and not otherwise accessible to me. I stared at that picture for entire evenings, aching to know what I was really looking at. After this I began to search for this sort of thing everywhere, and I occasionally found it; but nowhere did I find so much of it as when I discovered *As I See*, a collection of Artzybashev's pictures. This book used to stir me up so much I would get physically ill after a few hours spent with it.

Nevertheless, I could not



Executive of the Future: an illustration for a cybernetics article in Esquire

suppress a dislike of most of his *Time* covers, which I found curiously flat. True, they were incisive and slightly weird, but they induced no slobbering beatitude. At the time I did not realise that they were simply portraits of 'newsmakers' done for money; I thought they must belong to some higher plane of achievement than I could then recognise. But the dismal truth dawned when Artzybashev died in 1965 and *Time* devoted its editor's column to a chummy obituary, recalling with great fondness the mutually enriching relationship the man and the magazine had enjoyed since the Forties. I cut out and saved the notice because it brought me a little closer to a hero I knew practically nothing about, and I carried it with me until it perished in my mother's washing machine.

The spore of disillusionment was the information that, to *Time* staffers at least, Artzybashev was known as 'Artzy'. For me that long Russian name had become a talisman, a serpentine adjective that lifted its filigreed head and lent itself to certain exquisite situations and sentiments. It was the title of a category of beautiful, virtuous mystery, the luxury of a name where none seemed possible. 'Artzy'? 'These men would have probably called Pythagoras "Thaggy"', I groaned bitterly.

But I gradually realised that Artzybashev was just a regular person like everyone

else, and that he probably drank highballs at barbecues and enjoyed being called 'Artzy' by such a big shot as *Time*'s editor. It was a dark and confused period for me, until I read Picasso's uncomprehending remarks about his own work and realised that Artzybashev, too, probably didn't really understand what he was doing.

As I See by Boris Artzybashev: 1954 Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.
Fifty Illustrators and How They Work by Ernest W. Watson: 1946 Watson-Guptill Publications, New York.

The Illustrators in America 1890-1980 by Wall and Roger Reed: 1984 Madison Square Press, New York.

Twist 2, now out from Kitchen Sink, reprints some Artzybashev gems.

Jim by Jim Woodring is published by Fantagraphics.

CAN YOU SOLVE THIS THRILLING DETECTO-MYSTERY?

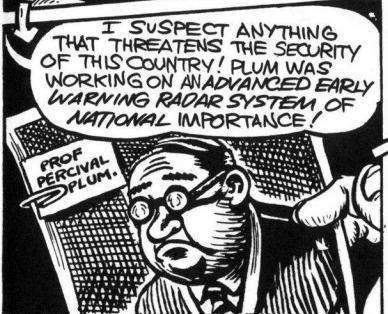
FALCoN OF THE YARD

FAR FAMED DETECTIVE FALCON OF SCOTLAND YARD AND HIS BOY ASSISTANT GINGER BLIN ARE ON A NEW CASE...





SCOTLAND YARD, GUARDIAN OF BRITISH JUSTICE...



TUDOR COURT, COUNTRY RESIDENCE OF THE LATE
PROFESSOR PLUM...





WELL, READER - DO YOUR POWERS OF OBSERVATION MATCH THOSE OF FALCON OF THE YARD?

IT WAS THE LACK OF CORDITE POWDER BURSTS THAT WOULD HAVE RESULTED FROM THE NEAR PROXIMITY OF THE MUZZLE, THAT TOLD ME HE'D BEEN SHOT BY ANOTHER HAND! SIMPLE, REALLY...



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SEA CHANGE

FIRES

Lorenzo Mattotti



AFTER THIS, COMICS CAN never be the same again. Right from the start, the reader steps into magic. The story to come is summed up in the opening panel of a battleship between two outcrops of the mysterious island of Saint Agatha. The cliffs are lush, natural, abstract, whereas the ship is grey, hard, man-made, sharply designed, on a different planet from the emotional tribal island; the ship is its enemy.

The ship's mission is to shed light on strange phenomena happening on the island. Young Lieutenant Absinthe's patrol is sent ashore first to scout

round. He senses the weird spirits of the island, who bewitch him and lure him deep into the woods. He straggles behind his soldiers and eventually deserts. The ship sends another patrol to look for him and they find him in the lighthouse, which he has painted with alarming designs. He is taken back to the ship but not for long. A strange fever of memories and long-forgotten emotions captures the souls of his shipmates, while tribal rites unfold on the island. Absinthe's ghost seems to haunt the landscape and may be the cause of the death of several soldiers. If it is not him, then perhaps it is the two strange little figures who soar above the fields, sprinkling red petals that drive the soldiers mad with happiness. The end of the nightmare draws near. The order is given to bomb the island flat, nothing must survive. Can Absinthe, locked up in the hold, prevent this destruction?

The plot gives rise to some remarkable images, some directly inspired by fine art – the abstract masses of colour from Vallotton and Bonnard, the atmospheric lighthouse from Edward Hopper. But these quotations aren't clever games or experiments. Mattotti needs them to tell his story, to convey the eruption of feelings at work here. Out of these uncontrollable emotions, man and nature change their appearance, transformed through a prism of tears. This is a place of memory, no longer a physical element but made of the same matter as dreams, dreams that are more concrete than your waking world.

Mattotti's debt to art's wildest configurations does not stop him using the fluid language of classic films and comics through this maze of a story. He also wants to highlight a new approach to reading, disassociating text and image, often creating a kind of contrapunto. Words and pictures are linked loosely just by our own act of reading. Mattotti uses this technique of the modern novel to create a tender work that takes us into the very souls of his characters.

–Francesco Sisci

Catalan 68pp Paperback \$12.95-£10.95 Import, Hardback \$35-£25 Import
★★★★★

THE SILENT INVASION

Larry Hancock and Michael Cherkas

ONE MAN, MATT SINKAGE, struggles to prove the very real existence of UFOs and their plans to invade the Earth, against the very real backdrop of an America taking an intolerant and frightening stand against Communism. Matt's paranoia from the alien threat makes for grim satire on the McCarthyite era of Russian invasion fears and Reds under suburban beds. It also poses several questions for the reader along the way. Is Sinkage really sane? Just what are the motives of the mysterious and powerful Council? Who is friend and who is foe?

Nothing is straight forward, black and white. *The Silent Invasion* combines several strands of cultural paranoia into an intriguing suspenseful tale. Larry Hancock's

story displays fine attention to historic detail and mannerisms and a skilled use of dialogue and vision, told at a pace that leaves you breathless. Michael Cherkas' art might prove confusing at first, but it sharpens Larry's scripting and expands the characters' paranoia. I only discovered the twelve-issue comic series at issue nine, picking up back issues through a combination of luck and unexpected benevolence. Good news then, that NBM are repackaging the complete story in four albums, starting with a revised version of the first three issues.

This isn't just the Fifties of America under the microscope; it's a well-characterised, savage tale of the fears we all have about everyday life, moulded into something that leaves more questions than answers with each chapter. Paranoia doesn't end on the last page

of a book; we all have our own secret fears. If you needed another reason for looking over your shoulder, there are plenty here!

–John Freeman

NBM Publishing \$7.95 - £5.95 Import 80pp Paperback ★★★

CRITICAL LIST



BATMAN: Ten Nights of the Beast

DC

Meet the stupidest Bat-villain yet, the KGBeast, a 'renegade' Soviet assassin, who's murdering key people behind the Star Wars programme. In Batman's shrewd opinion, 'I'll be discovered that his name is on the list of personnel assigned to the Soviet Embassy. He'll be granted diplomatic immunity.' The CIA's agent agrees, 'The Russians will take him home, scrub his mind and make a good little soldier of him again.' Does Jim Starlin really take this stuff seriously? His earnest attempt at gritty realism and headline politics backfires as crass comedy. Read it and weep! –PG



BLOOD

Epic

With no terms of reference or any sense of debt to comics history, this tale of two hot-blooded vampires invents its own rules and has an inbuilt arrogance with its sumptuous water-colours and written introductions. This could have been a glorious journey through J. M. DeMatteis' dreamscape, if only it didn't degenerate so often into self-consciousness. There are so many moments of stunning beauty, but injections of 'cleverness' mar what could have been something very precious. A pity. –JS



ITCHY PLANET 1

Fantagraphics

Omnipresent Gary Groth wears his heart on his sleeve with this polemically political and eco-sensitive production presented by Leonard Rifas and targeted theoretically at the predominantly native. However, these tracts will largely preach to the non-purchasing converted, not reaching the territory which, for example, Moore's *Swamp Thing* subverted. Unimaginative but informative. –DT



of a book; we all have our own secret fears. If you needed another reason for looking over your shoulder, there are plenty here!

–John Freeman

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Dave McKean

Pat Mills

Grant Morrison

David Pugh

Kevin O'Neill

John Ridgway

Ron Smith

The Viz boys

More guests to be announced



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UP AGAINST THE WALL

THE COMPLETE CRUMB COMICS

Robert Crumb

ONE ARE THE DAYS when underground comix were hawked from a pram on the corners of San Francisco's Haight Street. Perhaps their coming of age is best exemplified by Penguin Books' publication of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* last autumn. With Bill Griffith's *Are We Having Fun Yet?* published by E.P. Dutton, New York in 1985, and other recent titles from Doubleday and Random House, the once disposable nature of comics appears to be changing. Now the Grand Master of undergrounds is being given perhaps the highest curatorial accolade of all by the publication *The Complete Crumb Comics*, of which volume one is now available.



All this has emerged against a background of busts and censorship in America, in particular of Crumb's pocket-sized sex comics *Snatch* in the late Sixties. Throughout the Seventies Crumb's work became increasingly autobiographical, but since his earliest beginnings he has delighted in upsetting the status quo. His ironic and sardonic humour is used as a means of attacking both himself and the conventions of a hypocritical materialistic society. In this respect,

ROCKETS: A WAY OF LIFE

Steven Appleby

BRILLIANT, JUST WHAT I LIKE in comics. On opening the book you are immediately drawn into the personal dreams of Captain Star and his crew, building up to a fantastic vision of their bizarre lives. Star's first appearance is when he packs himself into a trunk to prove that life is 'packed with interesting things to do' and has himself sent to a restaurant, where he bickers with other crew members from inside the trunk.

Jokes are carried through from the beginning to the end of this book (the same jokes as in the 'Rockets passing overhead' series in *NME*). Little details keep surfacing to prove that insults and

prejudices are seldom forgiven or forgotten. The Captain's contempt for everyone except the Captain, and everyone's growing resentment of him, have an eerie truth to them. If Captain Kirk were real, this is probably what



everything can be ammunition as he employs parody, satire and ridicule to pinpoint his targets. Crumb has no capacity for sentimentality and his tongue-in-cheek approach is invariably uncomfortable and funny at the same time. It is often disconcerting.

Further 'official' recognition has come to Crumb in this country in an hour-long documentary on BBC2's arts programme *Arena* in February of last year. In an increasingly autocratic, censorious Britain, Crumb's exposure on the box, the great populariser, appears to have misfired. Those watchdogs of moral self-righteousness, Customs and Excise, have decided to act as our protectors against the purveyors of smut by seizing, and destroying, recent issues of *Weirdo*, which regularly features Crumb's work, and his latest solo comic *Hup 2*, the 'All Escapist Sex Fantasy Issue'. Not content with holding recent material, they have also put an embargo on previously accepted Crumb titles. Were these comics to be allowed into the country, they would sell in a handful of shops and display the tag 'Adults Only'.

The arbitrary nature of this policy is made apparent by the availability of full-frontal girlie and gay-boy magazines at every newsagent throughout the land. The ability the arts has to contest a whole host of social conventions is, without question, one of its values and functions. As part of its work it needs to represent an interventionist stance. The failure to recognise the inconsistency of its policies is a further endorsement of the Government's ineptitude and philosophically moribund attitude towards the arts. A good system to maintain radical practice is suppression. A final word from R. Crumb: 'The main point of the underground comics is absolute artistic freedom.'

—Les Coleman

The Complete Crumb Comics, Fantagraphics Books \$12.95 - £10.95 Import 160pp Paperback ★★★

Hup 1 & 2, \$2.50 each, and *Weirdos*, \$2.95 each, are available from Last Gasp, 2180 Bryant Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, USA. ★★★★

CRITICAL LIST

KINGS IN DISGUISE

Kitchen Sink

California, 1932. A boy leaves home when the Depression destroys his family in the opening episode of playwright James Vance's first venture into comics. Although let down by some awkward artwork from Dan Burr, the story has an evocative feel for the era, an effective use of understatement and an unsentimental compassion for the characters. This promises to be a rewarding series. —BL

★★★

LUCIFER 1 & 2

Harper

The star of 'The Mammy' in *Sounds* becomes The Devil and attempts to conquer the Earth. Unfortunately, Eddie Campbell's depiction of Hell is nothing new; he uses some good ideas, but the end result is dull compared to his reinterpretation of Greek myths in *Deadline*. Phil Elliott and Paul Grist do fine jobs on the art, considering. —HR

★★

SADNESS IN SPACE

Bob Morris

Reagan has ditched 'Star Wars' for his new defense programme 'Alien', to find the deadliest creature in the universe. Shuddered at the parasitic glove-puppet! And as Bob Lynch's dogged-car logic hurtles off into orbit, his real brilliance is being able to knit together all the madcap plot threads into Sav's most spaced out yarn yet! —PG

(99 pence plus post from the Fast Fiction Service, 27 Bracewell Road, London W10 6AF)

★★★

SINISTER LEGENDS

Savoy Books

he'd be like: ripping poor Jones' gonk into shreds and throwing it out of the airlock.

Memories of life aboard ship are seen alongside the crew's surreal present-day life on the small planet where they exist, trading horrible insults: 'What a fabulous view! Yes — you're nowhere to be seen, Star.' The book also contains 'The Spaceman', a miniature adult magazine about the detested Jones and his mindlessly loyal assistant Kenneth, a board game called Jones has been dismembered, where no-one has to play the part of Jones, and a cut-out model of the book's USS Enterprise, 'The Boiling Hell'. —Chris Reynolds

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Kris Guidio was house artist for *Legion Of The Cramped*, fan club for New York's groovy ghouls, *The Cramps*. His unpolished strips suited the enthusiastic tone of LOTC newsletters, but collected in this coffee-table tome, his shortcomings are all too obvious. There's too much reliance on photographic reference, an over-fussy concern with pattern making and 'clever' techniques. As an illustrator he's realised some cute portraits of Ivy Rorschach; as a cartoonist he doesn't cut the mustard. Out only a few weeks, this already reeks like some dud remaindered from 1975. —MB

★

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CURRENTLY THE MOST-THUMBED books on my shelves are the four phone directory-like volumes of the original Japanese version of *Akira*, striking artifacts with plastic dust-jackets and coloured edges, totalling some thirteen hundred pages. Even without understanding the language, the sheer impact of the graphics, bristling with complex detail, tonal effects and an exceptional kinetic charge, means that I can dip in at any point and get carried along with the flow, frantically turning the pages (backwards, of course) like the most avid manga-gobbler on the Bullet Train! So engrossing is the visual style that for once the often-bandied description 'cinematic' seems truly apt, whilst the linework is more European than most Japanese comic art and so is more accessible to Western eyes.

Alongside the usual merry-go-round of jobbing creators in American and British comics, or the slow, highly personal production of European bandes dessinées, Otomo's artwork stands out for its combination of consistently high quality with huge quantity. Presumably the product of the Japanese studio system, nonetheless it retains a personal vision and unity of effort.

Set in a post-apocalyptic Neo Tokyo, the story concerns motorcycle-riding delinquents, strange shrivelled children with paranormal powers, military secrecy and a being, Akira, of vast and terrible potential. There's more to this story though than mere flash, bang and wallop; it abounds with wit, humour and a warm humanity that makes its scale and spectacle all the more involving.

In this first English-language version of *Akira*, Marvel's Epic Comics have carried out the translation (not to mention the tedious reversing of the pages) with consummate skill. Dialogue is unfussy and direct, lettering is robust and elegant, and the added colour

NEO TOKYO

AKIRA

Katsuhiro Otomo



A GRIZZLING CHILD REVEALS AWESOME POWERS

by Steve Oliff makes the art even more attractive, not an easy task in view of its tonal density.

Enthrallingly readable, visually stunning and beautifully produced, Epic's *Akira* is one hell of a comic. Now if it only had those inscrutably Japanese plastic covers to protect against the rigours of inevitably frequent re-reading, it would be perfect!

—Dave Gibbons

Epic \$3.50 £2.25 Import 64pp Monthly Paperback ★★★★

BUZZBOMB

Kaz

HOLLYWOODLAND

Kim Deitch

WHILE THERE ARE SHELVES of the latest Bat-prod and Joker-junk in my comics local, it is often depressingly hard to find something suitably 'oddball', something that will twist a knife into my brain. Thank badness then for Fantagraphics, whose latest publications introduce old master Kim Deitch and *Raw* recruit Kaz, both with ugly tales to tell.

Kaz was a student of Art Spiegelman at New York's School of Visual Arts. The influence of his teacher's pet project, the pioneering *Raw* magazine, shows through clearly in this anthology. His first strips show how important such artists as Beyer, Mariscal, Pascal Doury and Spiegelman himself were to the development of his style, one that has since blossomed into something uniquely his own. The book's hot on reprints, the only new story being a

ToT four-pager, so real Kaz fans might feel they're being ripped. They shouldn't. It's neat to get all this stuff in one place and to watch a new talent develop in front of your eyes, like watching one of those speeded up nature films of fungus suddenly erupting into poisonous life.

Thumbs up for Kaz but, alas, down for Kim Deitch. Why I didn't enjoy *Hollywoodland* is a mystery to me, but I felt most uncomfortable with his story. Strange, because I consider Deitch to be one of the finest, his *Laugh In* *The Dark* comic of yore is a classic of its kind. The ingredients for a cracking Deitch yarn are there — Miles Mycroft: Psychic Sleuth, 'carny' craziness and Hollywood in all its geeky glory — but somehow they just don't gel. Perhaps if I'd read it as it originally appeared, as a weekly comic strip in a local paper (imagine the impact of Crumb in the *Evening Standard* instead of creaky old *Jak!*), I'd probably be counting the days till the paper hit the stands. In one



TOT'S MOM AND POP BY KAZ

solid lump, it's almost indigestible. The best bits are the *Hollywoodland* logos at the top of each page; the multitude of different ways Deitch can design them shows that he is a true genius.

—Savage Pencil

Fantagraphics Books *Buzzbomb* \$9.95 — £7.95 Import 96pp Paperback ★★★★

Hollywoodland \$7.95 — £5.95 80pp Paperback

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V FOR VENDETTA

DC

Read the papers, watch the news, and you'll recognise that the Fascist Britain of Alan Moore & David Lloyd's ten-part nightmare is no longer some disturbing warning of things to come, but a dark glass mirroring today's headlines. Now 'colorized' and concluded, *V* is more relevant than ever. —PG

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YUMMY FUR

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TO LAUNCH THE FIRST
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PROBE. SECRET
COMONAUT VIKTOR
POPOVICH IS TO BE
CATAPULTED INTO SPACE
AND NOT COME BACK LIKE
PERMANENT. A GREAT
LEAP FOR MAN, OR
MANKIND, OR WHATEVER.

SECRET DOCTOR
VALENTINA LEONOV
IS IN CHARGE OF THE
COSMONAUT'S HEALTH.



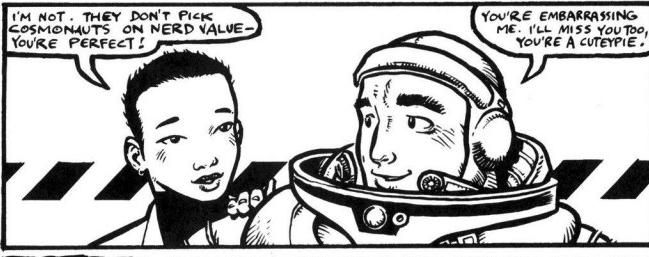
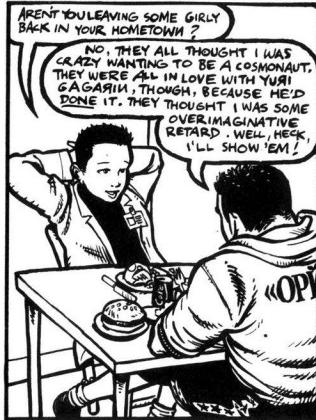
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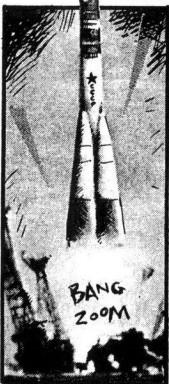
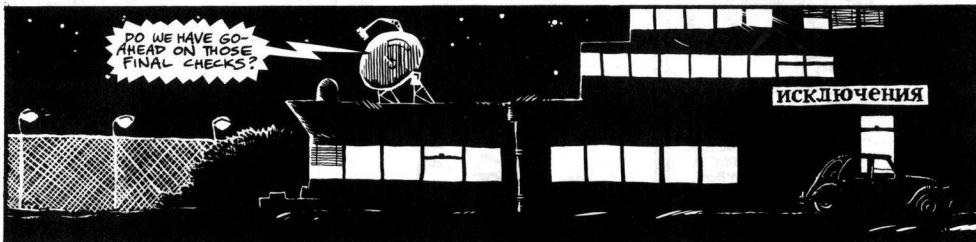
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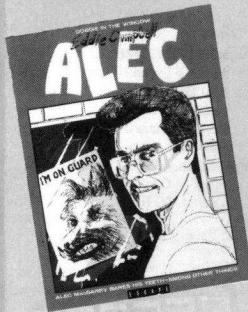
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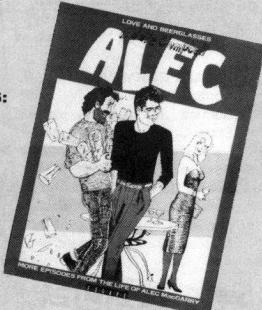
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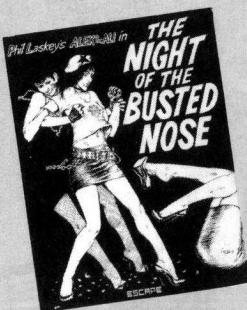
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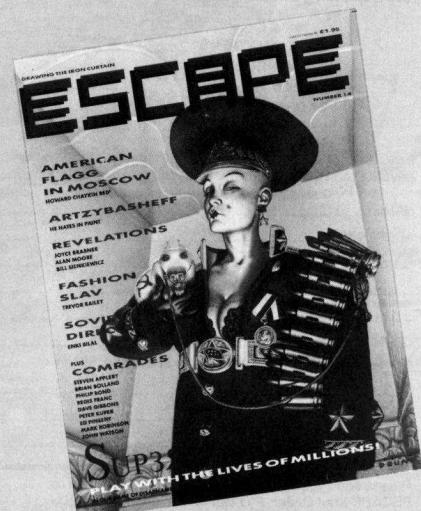
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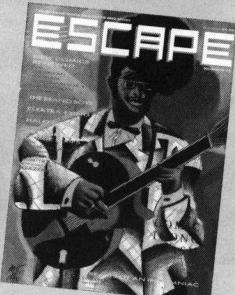
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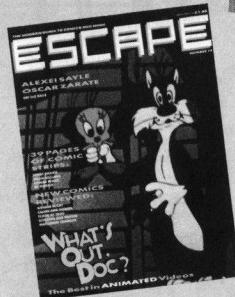
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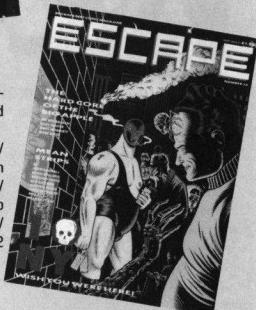
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SPY GERMS

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BUT HIS FINANCIAL BRAIN
IS CAPITALIST

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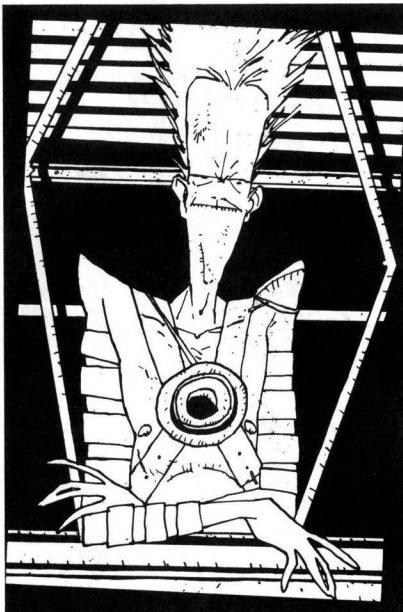
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE UNDERCOVER
OPERATIONS WHICH GO ON IN HIS UNDERPANTS

SOMETHING, SOMEWHERE IS SPYING ON SOME PART OF YOU

HIP PARADE

The first number tells the position of the entry this issue; the second its position last issue; the third is the number of previous issues in which the entry has appeared. The Fickle Finger of Fate identifies entries new to the Hip Parade.

★ 1-2	LOS BROS	6
	HERNANDEZ	
	<i>Jaime's Love and Rockets and Gilbert's Heartbreak Soup, Fantagraphics and Titan</i>	
▲ 2-3	MARSHAL LAW	1
	<i>Pat Mills & Kevin O'Neill, Epic</i>	
▲ 3-9	WATCHMEN	5
	<i>Moore & Gibbons, DC and Titan</i>	
▲ 4-	EDDIE CAMPBELL	4
	<i>Deadface & Bacchus, Harrier</i>	
▲ 5-13	MUÑOZ	4
	& SÁMPAGO	
	<i>Joe's Bar and Alack Sinner</i>	
▲ 6-10	KRAZY KAT	6
	<i>George Herriman</i>	
▲ 7-23	LUTHER	1
	ARKWRIGHT	
	<i>Bryan Talbot, Valkyrie Press</i>	
▲ 8-25	MOEBIUS	3
	<i>From Ar-Zach to Incal, Epic and Titan</i>	
▲ 9-	FRANK MILLER	5
	<i>Dark Knight, Ronin, Batman: Year One, DC</i>	
▼ 10-1	MAUS	3
	<i>Art Spiegelman, Pantheon, Penguin and André Deutsch</i>	
▼ 11-4	GLENN DAKIN	5
	<i>Paris Man of Paster, Harrier</i>	
▼ 12-6	HUNT	6
	EMERSON	
	<i>Outrageous Tales, Knockabout</i>	
▲ 13-21	BILL SIENKIEWICZ	4
	<i>Elektra, Epic and The Shadow, DC</i>	
▲ 14-	EDDY CURRENT	
	<i>Ted McKeever, Mad Dog</i>	



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|--------------|--|---|
| ▲ 15- | PETE BAGGE | ► |
| | <i>Neat Stuff, Fantagraphics</i> | |
| ▲ 16- | ED PINSENT | 1 |
| | <i>Primitif & Astorial Stories</i> | |
| ▲ 17- | ENKI BILAL | |
| | <i>Gods in Chaos & The Woman Trap, Catalan & Titan</i> | |



▼ 18-5	HELLBLAZER	1
	<i>Jamie Delano & John Ridgeway, DC</i>	
▲ 19-24	MARK BEYER	1
	<i>Agony, Raw and Pantheon</i>	
▲ 20-	VIOLENT CASES	
	<i>Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean, Escape</i>	
▲ 21-	2000 AD	
	<i>Thrill-packed progs, Fleetway</i>	
▲ 22-	CONCRETE	
	<i>Paul Chadwick, Dark Horse</i>	
▼ 23-19	ROBERT CRUMB	5
	<i>From Zap! to Hup!</i>	
▼ 24-8	VIZ	5
	<i>The Big Hard Ones</i>	
▲ 25-	TINTIN	5
	<i>Hergé's Adventures, Methuen</i>	
▼ 26-16	BATMAN	2
	<i>Holy Underwear, Robin!</i>	
▲ 27-	DAN DARE	
	<i>Frank Hampson's Eagle Star</i>	
▲ 28-	KEN REID	
	<i>Father of Frankie Stein & Faceache</i>	
▼ 29-22	DOONESBURY	4
	<i>Gary Trudeau in The Guardian</i>	
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BEST IN ISSUE

Here are the top five favourite strips from last issue. Voted for by ESCAPE readers. Be sure and tell us which strips in this issue you like the most.

- 1 SOS Esther**
- 2 Monitor**
- 3 Union Square**
- 4 Mr Mamoulian**
- 5 Life of Pedro**

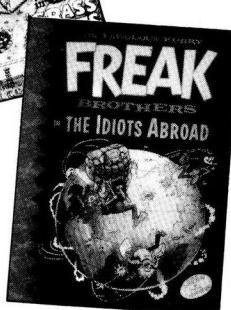
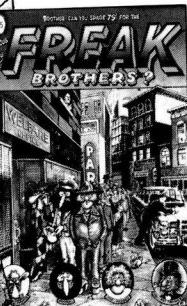
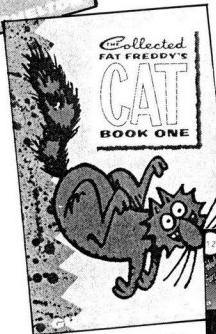
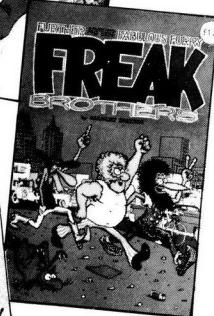
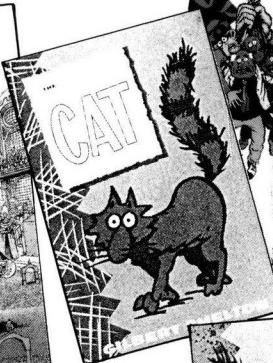
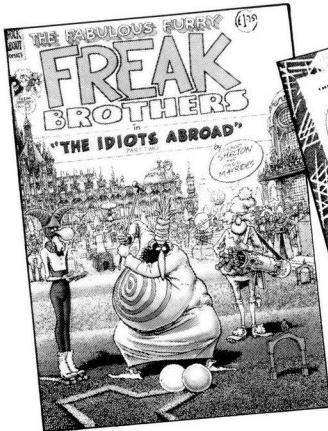
John Bagnall
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Antonio Cossu

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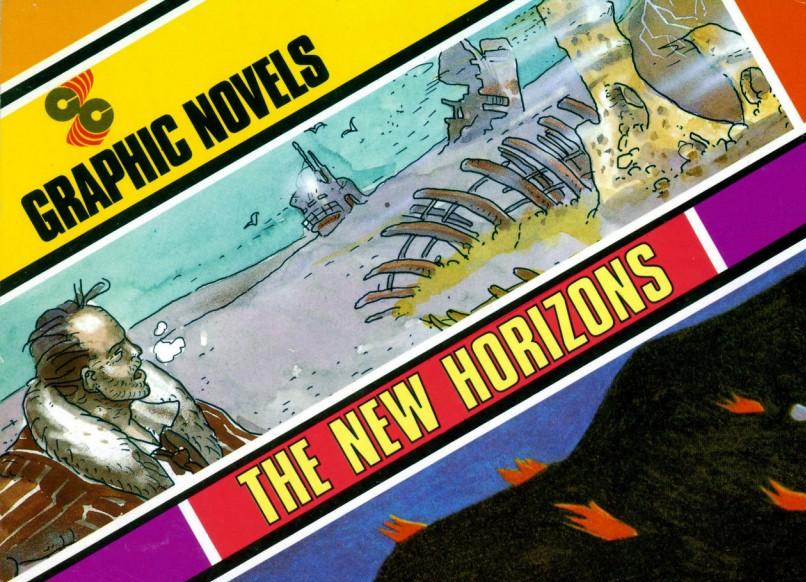
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